SEPT., 1907 15 CENTS

AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



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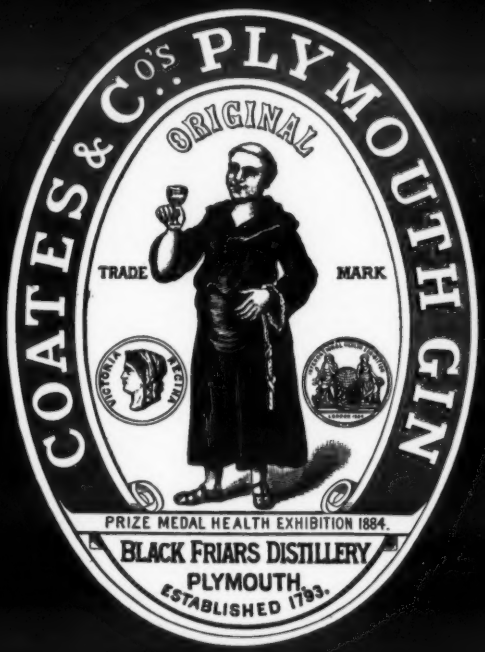


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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

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VOL. XX. SEPTEMBER, 1907. No. 2.

The WAYWARD SCALES

By Edith Macvane



UNTIL that morning, three years ago, when my mother called me to her to receive the news of Monsieur Duclozac's demand for my hand, I had always figured to myself, in an impersonal sort of way, that some day I should marry Henri la Guey.

Just why I should have taken this fact for granted it might indeed be hard to say. Certainly from the views of life which I imbibed—with five-o'clock tea, in the English fashion—in my mother's salon, I had no particular reason for fancying marriage to be a state synonymous with love. Any more, as my mama would say, than the monotonous trips which we make to the dressmaker are identical with the delicious triumph which rewards our patience in the end!

Though my poor little mama herself, indeed, as I knew well, had never been allowed by fate to enjoy any reward for her obedience to worldly necessities. Long ago, when she was a girl like me, she was very much in love with the Comte la Guey, Henri's father. But it seems that he had no money—like poor Henri—so her parents whisked her away to wait for a millionaire; while Monsieur la Guey, perfectly distracted, went off to America and married a lady of New Orleans, and Henri was born. How mama manages to consider Monsieur la Guey as so amazingly faithful to her, when he rushed off that way and married some one else, is what I cannot see. I am sure that I should not keep Henri's picture pinned up beside my image of Saint Veronica and say my prayers to it every night, if *he* did anything of the kind.

However, it was all just as well, because otherwise there would have been no Henri—fancy, the world without Henri! And, after all, it is better for mama, too, because now she has Henri, and in no case could she have had his father. For two or three years after their separation her parents found the millionaire that they had been looking for in a Paris celebrity, the son of one of Napoleon III.'s financial barons—my poor papa, the Baron d'Hortisols.

But it all goes to show, really, that after all parents don't know so much more about such things than the chil-

dren themselves do. This was a great match that poor mama made, everybody said so; and everything was very fine, and glittering, and splendid—though you may be sure that mama never forget poor Monsieur la Guey—till one day eleven years ago, when I was a child of eight. That was the famous day when the black came up twenty-nine times running at Monte Carlo, a most wonderful thing, it appears; but—papa had put all his money on the red.

So the next day he disappeared, with the little bit of money that was left, and mama's *femme de chambre* as well. It appears he had not very aristocratic tastes, poor papa! And so thoughtless of him, too, as I have heard my poor little mother say a hundred times, with tears in her eyes; if only he had taken off some one's else *femme de chambre!*

However, disappear he did, and we have never seen him since, though we have news of him sometimes, lurking about watering-places or appearing as assistant chamberlain to some minor prince. Poor papa! I feel sorry sometimes when I think of him, though not half so sorry as I do for mama.

Her religious principles, naturally, forbade a divorce; which was the more aggravating, as that very same year back came the Comte la Guey from America, a widower, and with a little boy three years older than I—Henri, you understand!

However, though I am still *jeune fille*, of course, still I have always been allowed to come into *five o'clock* when I came home from the convent, and I know what it thinks, the chic society, of such things as this! It would be very wrong, indeed, of course—especially in these days of persecution of our dear church by this upstart republic—it would be very bad taste indeed to disclaim holy authority and seek a divorce. But to console one's self with a little discreet happiness, very quietly—where is the particular sin of that?

However that may be, these particular persons had never the chance to find out; for the Comte la Guey was killed in a duel, the very week after his return to Paris, by the husband of a lady who had said disagreeable things about mama.

So there was poor little mama left a widow, so to speak, for the second time, and with two children on her hands—for she immediately adopted little Henri as her own, and transferred to him all the adoration that she had once felt for his father. And she, at the time, hardly more than a girl in years, pretty as a heart, courted by all the smart society, and possessed of an income less than ten thousand francs a year.

Is it any wonder that, with such a start in life, I should have led a strange childhood and stranger youth? My mama was perched, so to speak, on that delicate border-line which divides the Faubourg Saint-Germain from that doubtful region known as Bohemia. That is, while she belonged by birth and by marriage to the aristocracy of France, still there was the same hazy uncertainty about the revenues which paid for mama's lovely new furs and pearl rope, and the rent of our pretty little apartment in the Avenue Hoche, as there might be about the rent of some little garret in the Latin Quarter which she would pass with a scornful nose in the air. Also, although from the great carriages with armorial bearings which stopped before our door every afternoon there stepped comtesses and marquises beyond number, to drink tea with my mama, still there were always some, or so I gathered from the conversation, who held aloof. Though if they had come, these very old-fashioned and prudish ladies, I am sure I do not know how mama's little salon would have held them—crammed full as it was with the ladies of the chic society, with officers of the most famous regiments of cavalry, gentlemen from the Jockey Club—how do I know?

When I was a child in pink muslin, allowed to come into the salon to pass sugar for the tea, I naturally saw no fleck on this enchanting assemblage or on the delicious little establishment which I called home. Was it the opening of my mind to maturer judgment, I

wonder, or was it the bitter innuendoes of my Aunt Lucy which first made me conscious that my mother's world, chic and delightful though it might be, was not quite—was not quite——

My Aunt Lucy was English—the kind of English woman that you read about in the books, with large teeth and virtuous fishy eyes that seemed to run right through and through your morals, and to decide that you hadn't any. She was the widow of my mother's brother, the Vicomte de Velnay, and she came bundling over from England to chaperon dear mama, immediately after poor papa's fiasco at Monte Carlo.

"The poor child's relatives," she said solemnly, "ought to stand by her at a time like this."

So down she sat comfortably in the best bedroom of the little Avenue Hoche apartment, and drank two glasses of the best port wine every night, and went to the English chapel, and brought up her daughter Claire with the best masters she could find in Paris.

She disapproved highly, indeed, of the gay little ménage in which she had condescended to plant herself; but, then—a French education for her daughter Claire!

"I remain here in exile," she used to say, rustling her black silks with importance, "my *principles,* thank Heaven, are based on the sure rock of my *religion;* I have no fear of their being corrupted." Had anybody ever tried to corrupt them? I am sure I envy their courage if they did! "And for the rest, I hesitate at no sacrifice if I can be of service to my dear late husband's sister, and to my *darling child.*"

The services to her sister-in-law were, perhaps, of a doubtful value; but the second part of her favorite speech was, like some epitaphs on some graves, actually true. Her little daughter Claire was, in truth, a darling child; though, indeed, as being two or three years younger than I, I did not condescend to honor her with my notice, until Henri la Guey had left Paris for his *lycée,* and later to Saint-Cyr.

If I was Henri's faithful little dog and admirer, Claire was mine. In the person of this grave, rosy-cheeked child I tasted for the first time the sweets of adulation and discipleship. She followed me about, she copied my tricks of speech and my way of holding my elbows, she surrounded me, the *chérie!* with an atmosphere of adoration which, perhaps, I hardly appreciated at its full value till that disagreeable day came when the Vicomte Kérouac, my godpapa, presented mama with her famous collar of topazes and yellow diamonds.

Aunt Lucy had no diamonds. Was that the reason, I shrewdly asked myself, or because she disliked my godpapa, that she looked so black upon the yellow velvet case when mama, smiling all over like a girl, came tripping into her room to show it to her?

"Hold," said mama, as she retreated in some disorder, "hold, but she bores me till I am ready to drink water, this poor Lucy with her sermons and her airs of English prude!"

But that evening! Ah, I can promise you, Claire and I wept our eyes from our heads when Aunt Lucy at last changed the conversation to English so that I could not understand, and mama burst into a fit of laughter that ended in tears; and finally the door closed upon Madame the Vicomtesse and my beloved little Claire for the last time.

II.

One day when I was nearly nineteen years old my mama called me into her oratory—she is very pious, dear mama!—and said:

"My dear Yvonne, since your father is no longer of the family, it is necessary that we take counsel together on the important question of your marriage."

I answered "Yes, mama," as dutifully as I could. But, just the same, I felt my cheeks turn hot.

"No, my poor child," she cooed softly in reply, with something between a sigh and a laugh, "no, I will inform you at the outset, it is not of Henri la Guey that I am thinking!"

She knew quite well, you see, what

was in my thoughts; though, perhaps, she did not suspect the tender vows and secret, timid embraces which had already been exchanged between her interesting young protégé and her impulsive little daughter.

A prudent mother would doubtless have seen long ago the dangers of this innocent intimacy. To my little mama, however, such prudence was in the list of those bourgeois, Anglo-Saxon virtues which it is the duty of every chic Parisian to despise. So, whether the fault was mine, my mother's, or that of poor Henri himself, the mischief—so far as I was concerned—was done. And as I sat regarding my mama in her filmy blue négligée, perched upon her prie-dieu with a cigarette between her fingers, I felt my eyes brimming over with tears that I could not control.

"But, mama," I protested, in as steady a voice as I could command, "if I cannot marry Henri why should I marry at all?"

Mama flicked the ashes from her cigarette. "My dear child," she said, "let us consider the question seriously. The dream of my life, as of yours, would be to see you and this dear Henri happy together. But as, unfortunately, he has not a franc to his name and you have less—is that any reason, I ask you, that you, with your youth and beauty, should condemn yourself forever to the celibate life?"

At this final expression of the hopelessness of my position, it seemed to me that tears were my only adequate method of expression; but as I had always been taught to regard such signs of weakness as unladylike and vulgar in the extreme, I clenchel my fingers over my palms, and sat up as straight as my chair-back would permit.

"Yes, mama," I answered slowly, "and then?"

Mama smiled at me, as stooping toward the candles which burn perpetually beneath the great gold-haired image of Saint Veronica, she lit a fresh cigarette.

"That's my brave little daughter!" she said. "After all, you must remember, as I did twenty years ago, that marriage is not a pleasure—it is a means to an end. It is after the tax is paid, not before, that one can stop to think of our personal pleasure. And so, my dear Yvonne——"

I turned to her desperately. "Yes, mama," I cried, "I understand quite well now, you have selected my husband for me, the affair is arranged, I have but to learn his name and sign the book at the mayor's office. And so—his name, please?"

Mama looked relieved. I think she had expected more rebellion on my part, a more determined emotion. *Eh bien*, I said to myself, when one is to go to the guillotine, is it not as well to ascend the steps with grace?

"The husband that I have selected for you," she answered slowly, "is Monsieur Duclozac!"

I sat quite still, and it seemed to me that I grew cold all over. "Monsieur Duclozac," I answered slowly. "But, mama, he is so fat—and, besides that, he is old enough to be my grandfather!"

"Then all the more chance," answered mama cheerfully, "of your being speedily quit of the wearisome duties of matrimony. And with the splendid fortune which it is in his power to settle upon you—my child, yesterday he came to me with the formal demand for your hand. What answer may I return to him from the part of mademoiselle?"

"But, mama," I protested helplessly, "but, mama!"

My mother flung away her cigarette, and leaned toward me with a sudden seriousness on her pretty, painted, little face.

"Listen, Yvonne," she said. "You are a woman now, and the time has come when your future is seriously to be considered. This marriage with Monsieur Duclozac—it may not be your dream! But what other scheme, I ask of you seriously, do you propose for your future? Henri is a charming boy, I grant you, but he is penniless. You cannot keep house together, that understands itself, on the pay of a lieutenant of chasseurs. And as for your

dot—my only property is, as you know, an annuity which I bought with the remains of my fortune left to me by your father's fiasco at Monte Carlo. This little income dies with me—what provision is there left for you, beside the street? A home with your Aunt Lucy, in London——"

"No, no!" I cried.

My mother smiled triumphantly. "I agree with you, my dear child. Very well, the alternative—a marriage with a gentleman who, owing to the disparity of age and of rank, is willing to overlook the absence of the usual dowry. Here is Monsieur Duclozac, sixty-two years old, of honorable reputation and immense fortune, a director of the Bank of France—how do I know? The match is not ideal, but it has its compensations. If, in our present precarious position, I saw any other solution of your future, I would not, perhaps, urge this marriage upon you. But as things are, the only question possible appears to me, whether you will rebel romantically or whether you will accept the inevitable with good temper and philosophy."

"And—and Henri?" I asked, faltering.

Mama shrugged her slim shoulders under their filmy draperies of pale-blue liberty. "Our little Henri," she answered, "may make an outcry at the first idea of this arrangement—like you yourself, my child. But, like you—as I hope—he will learn to accept the inevitable with philosophy. After all, we do not live in a romance! Henri is a man of the world—he knows that in spite of love, one must live! And he knows, also, that—that——"

I rose to my feet, and laid my hand for support upon the tall, carved back of the prie-dieu upon which my mother's little figure was so airily perched. "He knows—what?" I asked unsteadily.

Mama raised her large eyes, smiling delicately into mine. "He knows, my child, what all the world knows," she answered concisely, "or, at least, what is the common knowledge of the little niche of the high world of Paris, in which fate has placed us. Namely, that marriage, while not delightful in itself, is an open door to liberty and all the delights of life. A certain portion of your life, to be sure, you are in honor bound to sacrifice to monsieur your husband. Then—then——

I did not answer. This unexpressed philosophy of our world, at which her words so delicately hinted, was, in spite of my youth, sufficiently familiar to me. How just was this philosophy, I had no experience of life to inform me. The future as I saw it appeared very dreary, very barren. Before me I saw only one alternative—to accept the inevitable, as my mother said, with good temper and philosophy.

She clasped her hand over mine in a little, caressing gesture, very contrary to her usual habit. "So it is agreed," she asked. "I carry your yes to Monsieur Duclozac?"

I nodded a slow assent. What other answer, indeed, was it possible for me to give?

III.

How long ago it seems, that interview between my mother and me, in the little oratory beneath the golden-haired image of Saint Veronica! Three years, indeed, have gone by. And here I am, Yvonne Duclozac, born d'Hortisols, twenty-two years of age, with an immense mansion in the Parc Monceau, a diamond tiara that once belonged to the Empress Josephine, a mother who is still one of the professional beauties of Paris, a husband to whom all the world is hat in hand when he strolls down the Boulevard, an automobile of the latest model, and a love of a baby, whom I adore—and memories. Are there memories, I wonder, still creeping back to haunt me?

And yet, I have tried to achieve the good humor and philosophy which were offered me as a healing balm for a separation which, I will own, touched me at the moment very acutely. But time, however, has brought to me a calmer acceptance of fate. This unvarying kindness of Monsieur Duclozac, the respect with which his character inspires me, have awakened in me, if not love,

at least a sincere attachment. We are, in short, a very proper married couple of the *haute bourgeoisie.*

My Aunt Lucy, I am sure, would be delighted if she could see what a respectable matron I am become. She expressed herself as pleased, indeed, with my marriage, when, three years ago, she condescended to come over from London, with Claire, to witness the ceremony. Dear little Claire! I would like to have her with me, if Aunt Lucy would but allow it—which she never would!—to make the dear child happy, to arrange an eligible and prosperous future for her. They are very poor, as I know. I am afraid there is small chance of Claire, in spite of her pretty, blue eyes, making an advantageous marriage either in London or here in France. Yes, I am an old lady, I am sure, planning to marry off all the world. And yet—and yet——

And yet I suppose I must be young, after all, or I should not thus be playing hide and seek with myself, trying vainly to trick my own heart as a weak bankrupt fences against admitting the truth to his lawyer. And yet, in spite of my mother's encouragement and liberal ideas, I have tried to forget him.

How long is it, indeed, since I have last seen Henri la Guey? Not since three years—ah, the eventful three years!—when in a final stormy scene I divulged to him my consent to my mother's plans for the future. It was a relief to me, perhaps, so far as my wounded heart could find relief, to see that he, at least, showed nothing of the cynical philosophy of marriage which my poor mama had urged upon me!

We said good-by, Henri and I. I returned to him the gold medal won at fencing, the little pearl bracelet, the mother-of-pearl box with "Yvonne" scratched upon the lid. He threw into the fire—or, at least, he declared that he did—the knot of blue ribbon which I had worn on the day of my return from the convent, the little white glove —how do I know?—all those familiar fetishes of which so many poor children beside ourselves have tried to make symbols of the eternal mystery.

Ah, that poor little tragedy of youthful love, so many, many times enacted before our coming, and to be enacted after we are dead!—the little, tender vine springing in such hope and jubilation, putting out its frail green tendrils into a world which has no place for it; then frozen, stamped upon, shriveled, and blown away in dust.

Yes, blown away in dust. There, at least, is one blessing for which—in spite of mama's ideas of marriage—I must give my thanks.

Henri refused to come to my wedding. From his cousin, the little Vicomtesse de la Monneraye, I heard that he shut himself up in his barracks at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where his regiment was then stationed—and became as one dead for all his world in Paris. Poor boy! No doubt he suffered. No doubt, equally, so did I. So that the month after my marriage the news came only as a relief that Lieutenant la Guey had been transferred from Saint-Germain to a regiment departing for active service in Algeria.

Since then my mama—who shares between us her motherly affection, with an added touch of romantic devotion, perhaps, for the son of her old lover —since then my mama keeps me informed from time to time on the progress of his career. It appears he is performing prodigies of valor, our young lieutenant, against stray bands of marauding Berbers, and the other savages of that distant desert. I am, indeed, glad to hear of his distinction, though mama reproaches me for my cold heart, that I do not sit down and send him my congratulations in person. No, between Henri and me there is to be no correspondence, no renewing of the personal bond which once already has been broken with suffering so acute.

Like the fisherman in the "Arabian Nights," I have overcome the mysterious genie of my love, I have confined it and clamped it and sealed it, and sunk it into the depths of the sea. But if, for curiosity's sake, I drew it once more to the surface, if I played with it and tampered with the lock, what reason have I to think that for the second time

I might win the victory over it? For in the story, you see, when the imprisoned force found itself released, it swelled into a deadly environing monster that could never be overcome, never confined in its poor little casket again.

Yes, every week when I make my prayers at the Madeleine, I add the clause: "Please, dear God, keep Henri safe and happy—in Algeria!" For no, I cannot stoop to the idea of that "discreet happiness" which poor little mama dangled before my eyes as a bait for my wealthy marriage. For he is kind to me, Monsieur Duclozac; he is bourgeois, perhaps, but he is brave and kind and honorable. No, I could never stoop to the amiable deceit which the "smart society" finds so convenient, so inevitable.

Why, I wonder, does the idea of Henri return upon me with such force to-day? Perhaps it is because last night, on my return from the opera (which I had attended with mama and some of her friends) I sat for a moment in the open window of my boudoir, overlooking the Parc Monceau. The spring air was delicious, the street-lamps burned low. A passer-by, moving leisurely down the street, whistled a few bars of a little, old air which knocked upon my heart.

Au clair de la lune
Mon ami Pierrot.

How often and often, in the old days when Henri came in from his college to take the second breakfast with us, had I heard the melody of that little nursery rhyme, whistled outside on the landing as a signal of his coming. Thus, you see, I could myself open the door, and we could have a few moments of stolen interview before the coming of mama or the *maître d'hôtel*. For a moment, last night, I was almost tempted to violate the propriety of my position, by whistling the next staves in return.

But my little Remy began to whimper in his cradle, my husband came in from his room. I am an old lady now, you see, no dreams for me! And what business, indeed, have I with nursery rhymes except to sing my little son to sleep?

IV.

To-day, according to my custom, I went for my afternoon ride in the Bois. Usually I take mama with me in the automobile, or little Elise de la Monneraye, or one of the elderly sisters of my husband. This time, however, mama—who turns up her nose at my humdrum bourgeois ways—was gone with a smart little party to a private view of new pictures for the Salon. As for any other company, to-day I preferred my solitude.

The slim-shafted forests of the Bois were just veiling themselves in the filmy green of early spring; the fountains played with frothing water, the green slopes of the mimic hills were covered with pale crocuses and the bright buds of new tulips. In the various pavilions and tea-shops the spring toilets had begun to swarm with their attendant cavaliers. The winding white roads between the trees were filled with a procession of automobiles and swiftly moving carriages. *Tout Paris* was making its afternoon promenade—and I, Madame Duclozac, though a part of that *tout Paris*, felt myself for the moment strangely aloof, singularly alone.

Are there, I wonder, such things as premonitions, of which we so often hear? How many times, in the last three years, had I said to myself: "If around the turn of that road now, if behind the corner of those jutting laburnums, I should find myself face to face with Henri!" This afternoon, for the thousandth time, as the automobiles swung from the Avenue of Acacias into the Avenue of the Seven Stars, this thought came to me; but with the difference that to-day, cantering sedately toward me along the bridle-path, I beheld, like a ghost, the vision of Henri's face.

The next instant the horse had reared and wheeled, my chauffeur had checked the flight of my automobile. "Yvonne," cried the voice of Henri la Guey, suddenly in my ears, "don't you remember me, Yvonne?"

They were ridiculous, after all, my hysterical fears, my vaporish forebodings. With what delight did I greet him, my old playmate and companion—and then, when he had given his horse in charge to his *ordonnance*, with what honest pleasure did I behold him seated by my side in the automobile, exclaiming over his delight at this happy chance, demanding of me the news of myself for the eternity of the past three years.

His manner was frank, friendly, eager. I should have felt myself a fool, had I let my self-consciousness interpose a barrier between us. His face was thin, browned by the winds of the desert, but his eyes were as bright and as keen as in the old days; and in all his bearing there was a dashing grace, a new distinction that told of worldly success and of self-command.

"Dear Henri!" I cried in a delight which I could not check. "But I am contented, my faith, to see you again. And now, tell me, how comes this happy chance? How is it that you find yourself back in Paris—why is it that I have had no warning of your arrival?"

"One question at a time," he smiled at me. "First, I am here in Paris because this good republic of ours, finding that it had had enough of my valuable service in the Soudan, has kindly given me my promotion and commanded me home to Paris to make a special report to the minister of war."

"You have your promotion?" I cried. "Ah, *mon Dieu*, but I am glad to hear it. A thousand, thousand felicitations, monsieur the captain!"

He took the hand which I extended to him. "Thank you, Yvonne," he said quietly. "And as to your other question—I sent no warning of my arrival, because it is only a week or so since I myself had news of it. I saw Elise for a few moments this morning, then I took breakfast with your dear mother. She wished to telephone you to join us, but I told her that I would not have you annoyed. So now, see how chance has rewarded my unselfishness!"

Yes, it was pleasant to see him again. After all, where was the danger? I have been foolish, these past three years—of a foolishness to cut with a knife.

"But when," I asked, "did you arrive in Paris, my friend?"

He laughed a little awkwardly. "Last night," he said, "and see how stupid it is, the heart of the wanderer. Though it was past midnight when I found myself installed in my apartment, I was taken with a sudden eagerness to see the old familiar faces again. So as I had the address of your new house, still remembered from the wedding-cards of three years ago, I took a stroll through the Parc Monceau. How high were the walls of the homes, how noisy the horse's feet upon the pavement, after the empty spaces and the silence of the desert! I felt a sudden homesickness, an old longing renewed came over me—had there been a light in the windows of your home, I should have descended upon you and Monsieur Duclozac, late as the hour was. But the house was dark, except for a light in the second story. So I had to wait, you see, for this happy chance of to-day."

A little haunting idea returned upon me from the shadows of last night. "Did you," I asked, hesitating, "did you, I wonder—did you whistle to yourself, as you walked down the Parc Monceau?"

He smiled and I thought that I saw a little flush creep for a moment under his tan. "How do I know?" he answered lightly. "Does a man walking alone at night know when he whistles and when he does not? But still there is a little tune that comes back to me from the high, sunny spaces of the desert—from an even more remote past, perhaps——" He hesitated. "Do you remember it, I wonder, Yvonne?"

I did not answer. Whether it was something in his voice, whether it was the stealing recollection of our last night's unconscious communion, I do not know; but from that instant a curious sense of foreboding, helpless yet curiously sweet, stole over me. I felt myself, as so many women have before me, a plaything in the hand of fate; a mere rose-leaf poised in the ripple of a cataract. The sensation was strange,

terrible, yet curiously sweet. I made no good resolutions, because as yet I had no time to be aware of any temptation. I only knew that Henri was beside me, so erect and soldierly in his blue and scarlet uniform, looking at me with a laugh in his brown eyes, just as in the old days.

"You are happy, Yvonne?" he said suddenly. "Yes, I can tell from your appearance life has agreed with you well since I saw you last!" His voice took on a sudden note of impersonal candor. "You have lost your schoolgirl air; you are quite a woman of the world now, Madame Duclozac! Do you mind my saying that, I wonder?" I was silent, and he went on. "You are quite beautiful, you know—bah, of course you know it! You have not waited all these years for a savage to come back out of the desert to give you *that* information. Yes, you are a *grande dame*, with your dark-blue eyes and that little scornful lift to your profile. All you want is a trifle of powder on the hair, and a paroquet perched on the wrist, for people to believe that you have stepped down from one of the old canvases in the gallery at Versailles. Ah, we should be grateful to you, madame, we other moderns, that you *did* step down into our poor humdrum world."

The words in themselves were nothing, yet the tone in which he spoke seemed vibrant with a thousand possibilities from which I resolutely turned my face. "That is enough," I said hurriedly, "about me! Now, Henri, tell me of yourself. You have come to live in Paris now, you say?"

He nodded with a little bantering smile. "I have just taken an apartment," he said, "in the Avenue Hoche—rather an agreeable little apartment, where I have installed myself with my collections of Moorish vases and Arabian rugs, and my two black servants. My cook and my chauffeur I hope to find to-morrow, when also I hope to settle whether my new automobile is to be a Mercedes or a Panhard. Which make, I ask you, is the choice of Monsieur Duclozac?" And, concluding this rapid enumeration of details, he leaned with a laugh toward the name-plate of the machine.

But I surveyed him in amazement. This luxurious scheme of life which his words unfolded to me—was this proposed as a serious possibility by my old friend Henri la Guey, the penniless officer of chasseurs? The Avenue Hoche—an automobile!

"Since when, my friend," I asked lightly, "have you become millionaire?"

His eyes met mine with a sudden curious deepening of their shadows. Between our encountering glances there seemed to rise up, in that brief and fleeting moment, the thin ghost of the vanished and buried past. I tried to smile, to drag my eyes away—Henri spoke hurriedly:

"Since the day—I have mentioned it to no one, these three years of exile, but I suppose I must own it to you, Yvonne, first as well as last—since the day of your wedding. Yes, it was on my return from watching the carriage outside of the Madeleine that I found in my little room at Saint-Germain a letter from an attorney of New Orleans, North America, telling me of the death, intestate, of my mother's brother, and my inheritance of—of how many million francs; shall I tell you, Yvonne?"

He concluded abruptly with a little ironical laugh. "The day of my wedding, Henri, this came to you?" I asked, in a voice which I tried to make that of cheerful congratulation.

He nodded. "The curious thing," he added, "was that it had been directed, in the first place, to my old estates in Brittany; and by the stupidity of my old housekeeper there it had been delayed a full week in its coming to me. Who can say that fate has no sense of humor after that?"

The automobile glided down the Avenue of the Acacias, in a circling return to the corner of the Avenue of the Seven Stars. A little withdrawn from the stream of *tout Paris* stood Henri's orderly, anxiously controlling the two restive horses under his hand. The

tonneau door was opened; Henri bent low over my hand.

"I may pay my respects to you some afternoon at your *five-o'clock,* madame? I may have the pleasure of being presented to Monsieur Duclozac, and to monsieur, your son?"

His tone was dry, calm, impersonal—a tone which, so far as I could achieve it, I imitated in my reply:

"But certainly, my friend, any afternoon you will be welcome. A thousand congratulations on your new prosperity—and au revoir!"

V.

That evening I returned with my husband from a dinner at the Rothschilds—a middle-aged, respectable dinner, where I ate from gold plate and listened to the discourse of the elderly financier on my right on the dependence of Petersburg upon Paris capital. My diamonds were the finest in the room; my hair was *ondulé* to perfection. Monsieur Duclozac—who is obliged always to return home early on acount of a certain indigestion from which he suffers—expressed himself, on our way home in our new electric brougham, as delighted with my evening's success.

"You are, indeed, the crowning achievement of my life, Yvonne," he observed, smiling, as he lifted my hand from its muff of white ostrich-plumes and saluted my fingers with grave gallantry.

Being wearied with the night's gaiety, he surrendered himself immediately to his valet, who waited for him at the door of his room. But I—after I had paid a moment's visit to the nursery, to make sure that my little Remy slept tranquilly—after I returned to my room I could not think of sleep.

The image that I beheld before me in the long mirror recalled to me Henri's words of this afternoon. Was it, indeed, beautiful, the figure that the glass gave back to me—a shape of airy falling laces, of winking diamonds, and cheeks which a new excitement had flushed to a strange carmine? Perhaps I was beautiful—surely I might admit to myself a fact of such slight importance in the world, which, like Henri's sudden accession to fortune, was only one of the jokes which the Fates like to play upon us poor mortals.

The clock struck twelve. I turned to lay my hand on the electric button, to ring for my maid—suddenly behind me there was a little frou-frou of silks, a little gurgle of laughter; and before me in the mirror, looking over my shoulder with a face of smiling mischief, I beheld my mother. Like my sister she looked in her pink robe, her delicate *maquillage,* and her shining hair.

"*Pat-a-tras!*" she cried. "Leave that glass, Yvonne—which only tells you one-half the truth, I assure you—and come with me. Listen—I drive this instant down the Parc Monceau on my way from Lélia's soirée to a ball at the Marquise d'Albin's. I behold a light in your boudoir window—I say to the vicomte, your godpapa, who is down there in the brougham now: 'Hold, Victor,' I say, 'this poor child hides herself from the world as we hide the old love from the new. If we descend upon her now, and drag her from her nursery for a little holiday! Your godpapa agreed, so here I am—and here are you, with your gilt slippers and your diamonds! Come, *chérie,* come!"

For an instant I hesitated. After all, why should I not for one night return to this gay, mad little world of my mother's, from which my marriage and the birth of my son had to some degree isolated me? The encounter of this afternoon had unsettled me; my mother's sudden irruption and proposed adventure filled my blood with a curious, a mounting excitement. After all, Monsieur Duclozac was in his bed, my child had no need of me—why should I not take this little pleasure which fate and my mama had thrown in my way?

I turned to pick up the white lace cloak which a moment before I had so heavily flung off. "I'll come, mama; I'll come!" I cried. And hand-in-hand, like a pair of schoolgirls, we ran down the wide staircase together.

"Listen, Yvonne," cried mama. "I

wanted to see your amazement when we entered the ballroom together, but I can keep the secret no longer. Listen—who do you suppose is come?"

I laughed into her eager face. "I know," I said. "I met him in the Bois this afternoon."

My mother shot her dark eyes at me. "You have seen him already, have you? Little sly fox, well done! *Eh bien,* then, do you know that he is come back a hero, our Henri? Decorated, famous, sought after by all Paris! And then his fortune——"

The *valet de pied* stepped forward to open the door for us. "His fortune, yes," I repeated calmly, as I adjusted my boa of white ostrich-plumes.

Mama, at my side, breathed a delicate sigh of regret. "Who would have foreseen it?" she cried, with an accent of vexation, like an injured baby. "Our Henri, a millionaire!"

I tried to laugh as we ran down the steps together to the porte-cochère. "It's too late," I said lightly; "too late for that kind of talk now, mama, you see!"

"Too late?" she said. "And why?"

The next moment we were in the carriage, with my lace and fluttering plumage squashed bodkin between mama's pale velvets and the vicomte's portly furred overcoat. "Hold!" he cried. "We bandits have been successful! A thousand welcomes, my dear child!"

Yes, the bandits had plucked me from the monotonous serenity of my home. To what they were carrying me I did not know. But across my tremulous and uncertain visions of the world to which they were conducting me there flickered, like fireflies through a summer night, the gleams of my old playmate's brown eyes.

VI.

How long ago is it now since that dance at Madame d'Albins, when Henri and I waltzed together and the violins played *Amoureuse?* A month, I know it is a month, because the jonquils are faded in the Bois, the pansies and laburnums are in full bloom, and my maid torments me every morning to make up my order for my summer clothes. Yes, by those outward signs I know that a month has gone by; otherwise, you see, I should not know whether it was a day—or a year!

Yes, it makes me tremble a little, I think, the distance between the Yvonne of to-day and the Yvonne of a month ago. It was, indeed, a strange, new world which my mama's nocturnal raid opened up to me. In the days before my marriage, when as a young girl I passed the teacups and listened to the conversation in my mother's salon—in those old days it was not as a member, but as a spectator only that understands itself, that I approached the smart little inner ring of Paris society of which the beautiful Baronne d'Hortisols is one of the recognized leaders.

Then came my marriage—the open door, as my mother promised me, to the *agréments;* the thousand delights which life holds for those who know how to snatch them from her. *Eh bien!* if I have not found it so it has been, I suppose, the fault of nobody but myself.

But now that, partly by accident and partly by mama's design, I find myself drawn back as an active and important member into this little coterie of clubmen and comtesses—this little *smart world,* as they themselves would say in the English jargon that they love! Now that I find myself returned as Madame Duclozac, a married woman, a millionairess—some are kind enough to say a person of some beauty—ah, *mon Dieu,* how different from an existence that I have hitherto led, or even dreamed!

My husband makes no objection to my new way of life. Provided that he may stay at home with his cigar, his little son, and his *Le Rire,* he is enchanted, he says, to see me enjoying the delights appropriate to my years. My mother is only too ravished to take his place as my protector; and so behold Yvonne flying from dressmaker to automobile parades at Longchamps, from automobile to *five-o'clock,* from

five-o'clock to dinner at the Café de Paris; then to opera, soirées, and pompadour balls.

After all, there is something in it, the philosophy of the world in which I was born, to which now, as of right, I am returned. Ah, my faith; where, indeed —as they say, my new friends—is the use of being young unless one drains the cup of youth; where is the profit of beauty if one is never to see its reflection in dazzled, adoring eyes? Perhaps—perhaps they are wrong, but it is nevertheless, of a strange exhilaration to see oneself surrounded and courted by so much that is brilliant, so much that is most celebrated in this world of Paris.

As for Henri—yes, I will look squarely into my own heart, and see what it holds for this old companion of my childhood!—as for Henri, the little flutter which his sudden return stirred up in me was, I am sure, nothing but the faintly quivering ghost of a departed childish emotion. I see him every day, but he is quiet, reserved, and distant in his manner. He is, moreover, at this moment the lion of Paris—the returned hero, the discoverer and conqueror of our African possessions, no less! But every afternoon he takes mama and me out in his automobile, or to tea at the Elysées Palace. It is extraordinary how pleasant they are, these little family reunions; the little quiet intervals in the whirl and sparkle of a Parisian's day.

Mama, who adores Henri as devotedly as ever, maintains the conversation with such spirit that I need never open my mouth unless I choose—a luxury which I appreciate at its full value. And Henri himself—how interesting is his talk; his tales of mountain warfare and of the blazing, mysterious desert!

Then in the evening he comes, perhaps with a half-dozen others, to visit the loge where mama and I sit together at the opera. In the whole tier of boxes the glasses are turned upon him, the young hero of the Soudan, with his tall stature and his glittering uniform of blue and silver. Or if it is a ball that we attend, a little party at baccarat—how do I know?—mama's great boy, as she loves to call him, is always at our heels. It is ridiculous, indeed!

But with all this, no sentimentality—that understands itself. Of all my ring of adorers, my old friend Henri la Guey is the only one who never annoys me with talk of my charms and his own admiration. It is delightful, indeed, into what a kindly, delicious friendship it has developed, that old boy-and-girl attachment of our youth!

VII.

As spring grows into summer the gaiety of this Paris world approaches its climax; though the hot weather, which this year comes to us early, makes dancing wearisome and the opera an impossibility. So yesterday, when Elise de la Monneraye, through the telephone, proposed an excursion into the country, we all jumped for joy.

Accordingly, in the cool of the late afternoon we all set out for Saint-Germain-en-Laye—five automobiles, with the Comte la Guey, of course, in the lead. With him were the Baronne d'Hortisols — in heliotrope — Madame Duclozac—in cream color, with a long veil of pale-blue chiffon—and for the fourth, a dashing little brother officer from the war office. Monsieur Duclozac, of course, remained at home.

Ah, it was delicious, that flying trip along the straight, level highroad, with its bordering walls of shadowy poplars; whirling along across the valley of the Seine, till the hill of Montmartre turned into a dim blue blur on the horizon, and the terrace of the ancient royal city rose up gray and forbidding before us! Once that we had ascended the winding road to the town above, however, we found nothing forbidding in its green labyrinth of forest roads, and the brilliant company which promenaded on the terrace or drank their tea at little tables in the gardens.

It was still too early for dinner. Accordingly, while the Vicomte de la Monneraye, the little fat husband of Elise, was scanning the menu-card at the Pavillon Henri IV., and discussing

mysteriously with the waiter the comparative charms of eating cold or of eating hot—during the necessary hour of discussion and of preparation; the forest beckoned our feet with allurements that could not be withstood.

"Play hide-and-go-seek if you will," cried Elise; "but as a loyal wife, I demand that you return before the soup grows cold."

So off she flew with a young dark-eyed poet, a sprig of Gascon nobility, who at present forms the central interest of her life. Elise is little, and yellow-haired, with big blue eyes that look at you as innocent and appealing as a baby's; and the scandals about her are as brisk as those concerning any other vicomtesse in Paris. Her husband, however, when he is not eating and drinking, or studying the wine-card, has his own distractions, which prevent him from interfering with hers. They are always perfectly well-bred toward each other, and form, indeed, the model couple of my mama's society.

The path from the Pavillon lies across the gardens; and from the gardens one steps into a wilderness of radiating white roads, roofed with quivering green, and melting off into a dim perspective of dark tree stems and misty, twining ivy. Henri and I, who in the rambling paths found ourselves somehow separated from the others, walked in silence over the soft moss in which our feet sank without sound. From behind the screen of leaves which shut us in as we walked we heard the voices of our unseen companions, and the vague, distant songs of those working people who make of their evening bread and wine a little forest festival.

"Yvonne!" said Henri suddenly. "I am, as you know, nothing but a savage from the desert; so you can expect from me no appreciation of millinery triumphs. Your hat is a marvel, but—here we are in the forest. Take it off, Yvonne, please!"

I laughed as I pulled out my long turquoise hat-pins and unwound the lengths of pale-blue floating chiffon from my shoulders. A low-growing laurel bough brushed my forehead, and a stray lock of hair was swept, waving, into my eyes. I laughed again as Henri took my hat from my hand.

"But see," I said, "what you have done!"

"No," he cried seriously, as I lifted my hands to pin the wandering lock into place; "no, leave it as it is, please! When I see you walking that way, with your golden head bare against the green branches, and your hair a trifle ruffled from the studious order of its waves, then I fancy you a stray wood-nymph, escaped from your prison of foliage to walk a moment at my side. Daphne herself, perhaps, who knows? And I——"

I turned toward him with a laugh. The forest was very green and very silent about us. His eyes were looking straight into mine; and somehow the laughter died upon my lips. Something had fallen between us, my old playmate and me—a subtle atmosphere of vague enchantment, a mysterious film of electric and painful possibilities. I did not speak.

"No," he went on, "not Daphne! Those laurel-bushes grow too near, I do not wish to lose you yet." He paused for a moment, and the twigs crackled faintly in the deep moss upon which we walked. "I do not wish to lose you," he repeated, with a firmer accent, "again!"

The silence of the ancient forest was all about us—a stillness made up of infinite stirrings; of creeping and crawling life, of tiny whirring wings, of restless leaves. From somewhere behind the green shadows that enclosed us, a little voice was suddenly lifted up—the frail, uncertain voice of some unseen child singing idly to itself among the trees:

Au clair de la lune,
Mon ami Pierrot.

In spite of myself, I started—what memories did it not evoke, that old unforgotten song? The next moment I repented having shown my sudden agitation; Henri's eyes were upon me, and at what I read in them my trouble grew.

"Yes," he said, with a determined lightness in his tone, "the days were when I sang that song outside your door and you opened it to me. What would happen now, I wonder, if I came back with the same song, Yvonne?"

It is strange how in a single moment it can change, the world without and the world within ourselves. It is true what he says, that subtle student of our sex, Monsieur Marcel Prévost. "For the heart of a woman is even to herself a little of a mystery!" In spite of my marriage, in spite of the tranquillity of which I had felt myself so sure, what was there, after all, in my heart?

"It is time," I said faintly, "for us to go back to the others."

"It is time," returned Henri slowly, "for me to return to my African deserts. I see now what a mistake it was, my return—a mistake, that is, for myself. For I have not the vanity to suppose that on your side, Yvonne——"

He stopped short; and over his face, as I lifted perplexed and miserable eyes to his, I saw for one instant the flicker of a secret and desperate suffering. I stood bewildered, amazed; like a child wandered to the brow of a precipice; I knew not to the edge of what hitherto hidden abyss these last moments had led my careless feet. But what terrified me to sudden numbness was that in that abyss I saw new and terrible allurements; lips that called me, hands that drew me down.

"No," I answered, in a voice as natural as my unsteady lips could frame it. "No, no!"

He regarded me steadily. "Why do you say *no?*" he asked gently. "I have made no demand, I have urged nothing upon you, my little Yvonne!" He paused for a moment; then as I turned abruptly to take the path back toward the Pavillon: "I own," he said, with a sigh, "you do right in turning away from me."

He looked down at me with a whimsical half-smile as he walked so tall and alert at my side, in his English motor-clothes, which became him even better than the glittering splendors of his uniform.

"Pretty little Yvonne!" he said. "Beautiful Yvonne! If you knew across how many thirsty wastes, or how many footsore, weary marches, you have walked this way at my side, though you did not know it—though you thought you were here in Paris all the time! Yes, I declare to you that at no time in these two years have they been any less vividly present to me than at this instant—the supple slenderness of your figure, your dear little chin held in the air with so much pride, your soft cheeks with the dark, curving line of lashes with which you hide your eyes from me—Yvonne, let me see your eyes, if it is only to rebuke me for my boldness; let me see your eyes once before we go back!"

I did not answer; I walked on blindly, determinedly. My skirts swept the underbrush; my feet slipped in the moss and smooth carpet of dead leaves.

"Don't be angry with me, Yvonne!" cried Henri, with despair in his voice. "But, you see, I might as well own it, I nearly died of what happened three years ago. And then the next day that sudden rise to fortune—to know by how wanton an accident I had lost it, my life's happiness! Yvonne, I knew you before Monsieur Duclozac knew as much as your name. Have I no rights, even to tell you, only this once, that—that—— No!" he broke off suddenly. "Don't be afraid of me, dear Yvonne, I will not say it!"

"No," I answered desperately, "don't say it, Henri!"

Then, as a faint breeze drawing through the trees fluttered toward me a streamer of my pale-blue veil which Henri carried in his hand, I recalled suddenly to mind the slight occurrence which had precipitated this sudden tremulous disclosure upon me. Bare-headed here I was Daphne, was I? And for Daphne, who knew what environing peril? I clutched feebly at this symbol of conventionality to restore me once more to the dignified safety of Madame Duclozac.

"My hat, Henri!" I cried nervously, and arrested my steps for an instant to pin and wreathe myself in the protect-

ing shade and folds of my restored head-gear. But, like the Austrians at the Bridge of Arcola, it was the guns of my own defense that I suddenly found turned against me.

In the hurry and confusion of my mind I did not notice that I had stopped beside a long-armed tangle of those wild blackberries with which this forest is so thickly grown. With uncertain fingers I pinned on my hat—the soft evening wind caught a fold of my long veil, and licked it about a stalk of the waving bramble. I turned to disentangle it.

"Let me help you!" cried Henri, and stepped toward me with hands outstretched.

In spite of myself, a curious sensation thrilled through me, that it was with other imaginings that his arms were reached out to me. I shrank back.

"Thank you, no, no, Henri!" I cried.

But, ah! It was into the thicket of brambles that I shrank—the brambles which seized the folds of my fluttering veil from the wind and drew them in as greedily as the thirsty Charybdis sucked the waters of the sea. I turned; the thorns grazed my cheek and fixed their grasp upon my hair. I raised my hand in a desperate attempt to free myself—by the irresistible forces of a thousand tiny enemies the laces at my elbow were seized and pinioned.

"In just a moment!" I cried, with outward resolution. "Wait a moment, Henri—I can free myself quite easily, indeed!"

With a little smile Henri stood obediently by in passive observation of my struggles. But the breeze which had delivered me into the claws of the brambles continued my enemy. I might manage to tear my veil free, perhaps, but not my hair, not my skirt, whose soft white, woolen fabric had made its trailing folds an easy prey. My situation was absurd, ridiculous; yet, under the circumstances, not without its tragical complications—an Andromeda, bound hand and foot, who shrank in honor from the touch of Perseus' liberating hand.

"*Sacrebleu!*" cried Henri suddenly. "In another moment our joke will be good earnest; you will have melted into the thicket before my very eyes. Here—I insist, Yvonne!"

To resist his offer of help longer would have been the act of a child. So I stood helpless, with eyes downcast, as with slow, skilful fingers he unwound my veil from the clutch of the thorns and restored it to the unsteady hands with which I held it from the capricious wind. Then my imprisoned hair, where the interweaving of thorny twigs was deep and intricate. Henri, standing close beside me in the fading light, worked at my hair with a light and painstaking touch. I dared not look at his eyes so near my own; then I remembered what he had said of my lashes as they lay upon my cheek; and in spite of myself I felt my color rise. Was it the mounting of blood or the nearness of Henri's breath that touched my neck with a sudden warmth?

Then suddenly I realized, in a pang whose keenness was nearer to pain than to joy, that this was the first time in three long years that I knew what it was to be happy. For resignation to one's duty, you know, that is not happiness. And yet this happiness—how I feared it; how I had struggled against it! For even in the terrible sweetness of Henri's nearness to me, even in the recollection of mama's jaunty cynicisms and the careless example shown me by our world, I had not yet forgotten, you see, the kind old man that I had left at home, and the little son.

Ah, those wretched blackberry brambles—that a cause so trivial should stir into being such mysterious, such deadly forces!

Henri's fingers, working in the tangled meshes of my hair, brushed with a light touch against my cheek, and I started to perceive in his hand a curious trembling, like the thrill of a smitten harp-string; and in a strange, detached wonder I heard his breath come and go. Had I been free could I have turned away from him?—or was I held at his side by more subtle bonds than those of thorny vine and clinging

bramble? I did not know, the blackberries had put it out of my power to test my choice.

My liberated veil was gathered in my two unsteady hands; the last hair was freed from the obstinate green spines which held it. With a desperate gathering of my forces I turned away.

"One moment, Yvonne!" cried Henri, in an oddly beseeching tone. "Your skirt is still held, you see."

He kneeled in the moss at my feet, his head was bent over the tangled mass of green fetters and imprisoned folds of white. There was no danger of meeting his glance. I might let my eyes rest for an instant on his head—his dear, dark head, and the clear white line where his close-cut hair met the sunburned skin of his neck. How had I ever deceived myself into thinking that that head was one whit less dear to me now than it had been in the far-off days of my girlhood—in those long-ago days of childish hopes and of innocent love?

The stillness of rustling leaves and droning cicadas was all about us. The evening light, filtered through tall tree-tops, had changed from luminous green to the pallid gray opacity of twilight.

One by one the white folds fell from Henri's lingering hands. The last thorn was drawn out. Bending over, I perceived the sudden stain of a tiny scarlet spot.

"Oh," I cried, in confusion, "but I have hurt you!"

Henri, still kneeling at my feet, raised his face to mine. "No," he answered me quickly; "no, not in the least."

Then I saw the shadow of a sudden thought pass over his eyes; what he read in my eyes I do not know, but in his what tenderness, what pleading, what an ineffable sorrow!

"Yes," he said in a changed voice, "you *have* hurt me. You didn't mean to, dear, I know that. But—I may tell you, Yvonne?"

"I don't know," I answered, trembling. But, ah! I knew.

"I love you," he said passionately. "There's no use in my trying to change —you are so terribly dear to me, Yvonne!"

He hesitated a moment, while we looked straight at each other, past words, past disguises, straight into each other's poor, tortured, longing hearts.

"And now that I have broken my silence," he asked slowly, "what is there left for me to do?"

With an effort I found voice to answer him.

"There's only one thing left for you to do," I said. "You must go back again to the Soudan."

VIII.

They say history repeats itself; and indeed it seems to me that whenever my life lies quivering in the balance of fate, it is my mother's hands which swings the scale. For that same night of our return from Saint-Germain, as I sat alone at my window looking out at the cloudy spring night, a little flurry of footsteps warned me of the approach of madame the baronne.

As dainty, as coquettish as ever she looked, after her long and fatiguing day. My pale cheeks and swollen eyes, seen in the mirror behind her, might more easily be taken for those of her mother than of her child. *"Pat-a-tras!"* she cried. "What are these tales I hear of you, what stupidity are you committing now?"

I stared at her half-dazed as I made the answer which came first to my lips —an answer banal and self-righteous enough, yet which at the moment I meant with all sincerity. "I am trying," I said, "to do my duty."

My mother broke into airy trills of mocking laughter. "Listen to her, then," she cried. "Has her Aunt Lucy been here by any chance putting maxims of Anglo-Saxon morality into her mouth?"

I sat silent, bewildered, conscious only of my own misery. Mama went on with a growing violence strangely foreign to her usual smiling irony.

"And your idea of your duty," she cried, "is to send your oldest friend off into the wilderness to his death, and to

rob your mother of the boy who is as dear to her as her own son?"

I stared at my mother in silence. This was a new point of view, indeed! For the past hours I had been marshaling the forces of good and evil in my heart, fighting against temptation, praying for strength to choose the better path. But now—how to know on which hand lay the good and on which the evil?

"But my duty," I repeated the word helplessly, "to my husband?"

Just as in a play, there came a faint cry from the other room, and I heard the nurse's footsteps come flying in quick answer. My mother raised her hand.

"There it is!" she said. "Your duty to Monsieur Duclozac—performed, finished! You have given him his son, you have given him three years of your life, you have done all that could be expected of you; you have done more, you have fairly earned your freedom."

I opened my mouth to reply, but, ah! one is weak in finding words in rebuttal when one wishes to be convinced. "If you loved Henri——" my mother added in deliberate accents.

In spite of myself, the suffering of my spirit broke out into a little cry. The far-off innocent loves of our school-days, the afternoon's passionate outbreak in the solitudes of the forest, it seemed to me that these words of my mother's kindled into new life all these recollections that I had vainly been trying to subdue.

"*Mon Dieu!* If I loved him!" I answered helplessly.

The little noise in the next room had ceased, the house was very still. Through the trees in the park the damp night wind rustled heavily—was it my imagination, or did my ears tell me the truth, that from beyond the darkness of those leaves there came to me the faintly whistled bars of a little familiar air? And at that moment, perhaps, I realized for the first time the force and poignancy of my longing for Henri's presence beside me.

Ah! if I loved him, indeed!

"It is in many ways unfortunate," my mother went on, as though musing aloud to herself, "that our dear boy should thus be forced, at such a time, to return to Algeria. On such short notice, the posts open to him will be neither of the most agreeable nor of the most sanitary; and of course the summer fevers——"

"Don't, mama, don't!" I cried miserably. That there might be danger to our dear Henri on his return to a land where he had already won such distinction was a possibility which had never entered my mind. My mother went on inflexibly.

"It is now fourteen years," she said, "since the news came to me of his father's death—his father, from whom poverty, my marriage, and your papa's jealous disposition had separated me for, ah! how many years. But then, you see, I could take the boy whom he left behind him, my brave *chéri*, and make him like my own son. But if—— I have to meet the news of *his* death—what resource will there be for me then?"

She dabbed her eyes with a small square of Duchesse lace as she spoke. Poor little mama! Her nose was red; she looked for the moment almost withered and old. My heart reproached me for the pain which I was making her, for the danger to which my decision exposed my old playmate.

"Very well!" I sighed. "I spoke too hastily this afternoon. What right have I, after all, to command that Henri should leave his native land, and exile himself in the desert?"

Mama brightened directly. "Then I may give him your permission," she responded, "to stay in Paris?"

"My permission?" I cried desperately. "My command."

Mama rose to her feet as brisk as a lark. "My dear boy!" she cried, "how happy this news will make him! And now my news for you!"

I stared. "Your news?" I asked, in bewilderment.

Mama repaired the pink surface of her nose with the tiny powder-puff which she drew from the gold case at her side. "My dear friend, the Mar-

quise d'Albins," she said, "finds that her throat makes necessary a summer of mountain air. So before she sets off from Bagnères-de-Luchon, she places at my disposal, for the months of July and August, her delicious little villa at Deauville. You will be one of my house-party, *chérie?*"

"I and—and Monsieur Duclozac?" I asked unsteadily.

Mama turned her gaze upon me. Whether there was any meaning in her eyes I could not tell. "Monsieur Duclozac," she said, "is a gentleman whom I esteem highly—too highly to expose him to the late hours and indigestible food which I fear, alas! will be the rule of my unpretentious little summer home. And also I respect him too much——"

"Well?" I asked again.

"I respect him too much," she answered, with a guileless smile, "not to believe him sufficiently generous to allow his young wife this little holiday—always, be it remembered, in her mother's care! I may count upon you for July, my treasure?"

My cheeks burned, my heart throbbed with mounting excitement; not indeed so much at anything my mother had said as at the unspoken meanings which lay between our words. For I knew, you understand, who else was to form one of this merry little party by the sea! Yet when I sought my will to say "no" I found nothing. For what choice was left me, I blindly demanded of myself? In whatever direction I turned I was predestined to work wrong and distress for some one who loved me. And that being so, why should I not choose the easier course, the way which at all events led?—no, at that point my conscious reasoning stopped.

After all, I had made a mountain from a mole-hill. In commanding Henri back to his Soudanese deserts, I had been guilty of all that was most absurd, most melodramatic. What peril could there be, after all, in spending the month with my mother and her friends in this smart little resort of the Norman coast!

IX.

The month of June went by, the day arrived for my departure, with my mother, for Deauville.

"You will take the Mercedes, of course," said Monsieur Duclozac to me over the morning coffee which, according to custom, he drank with me in my boudoir. "For myself, I own," he went on, "I am too old to depend upon these modern methods of conveyance. The railroad, I assure you, will serve me very well for my trip to Vienna!"

I bowed in acknowledgment of his kindness; for beyond a doubt he was kind to me, this poor Monsieur Duclozac! But, after all, had I not paid him my price? Among the women of my mother's world, how many were there who had so equitably discharged their portion of the bond? And for the thousandth time in these past weeks I brought to the stilling of my conscience those arguments with which my mother, three years ago, had urged my marriage upon me. "Marriage is not a pleasure, it is a means to an end. A certain portion of your life, indeed, you are in honor bound to sacrifice to monsieur your husband. Then—then——"

Then what?

Even in my inmost thoughts I had, till to-day, postponed a definite answer to that question. Since that last day in the forest I had seen nothing of Henri. A month's appointment at the war office had kept him close at the ministry—and I, with a desperate, inarticulate resolve to pay to the last coin my debt of honor to my husband, had devoted every moment of my time to my little son and to his father. One or two letters, indeed, had pierced the shell of this artificial tranquillity; and to-day, the last before that appointed for my journey, had brought me a sheet of Henri's handwriting which could allow me no longer to hide from myself the end and significance of this summer's pleasuring.

"Dear, dearest Yvonne; *à bientôt* till Deauville! At last, at last, my little adored one——" My hands shook and my throat contracted as I read the

words of passionate hope and undoubting tenderness which looked up at me above Henri's name.

After all, what I was doing was no more than my privilege as a woman of the smart society; no more than was expected of every woman of this, my own, and my mother's world. Henri was waiting for me! That thought was in itself enough to blot from my mind all thought of other persons and circumstances. And in a golden haze of delight, which brought me back almost to certain blissful moments of my girlhood, I went to give directions for the completion of my packing, and to oversee the arrangement of monsieur's dressing-case, for his very opportune business trip to Vienna.

"Au revoir, my friend!" At last, after receiving the decorous salute of my husband, I stepped into the automobile. Behind him, our little son in her arms, stood the young nurse who had cared for him from his birth. As in these heats of June he had lately become rather pale, it had been arranged that she should take him home for next month to the mountains of her native Auvergne.

"Come back to me strong and rosy," I cried, "my poor little *mignon!*"

"Your trunks have gone?" inquired my husband, with grave kindliness. "You have everything here in the automobile which you need for your trip to-morrow?" For it had been decided that I should sleep this night at my mother's little apartment, so that we might all make an early start to-morrow in our respective automobiles; the Monnerayes, Henri, and the rest.

The chauffeur threw the lever. "Au revoir, my dear ones!" I cried, like the hypocrite I was. What did I feel as the superb home disappeared from my sight behind the row of acacias and the great gate? Nothing! But if I had not wilfully deadened all sensation in my heart and brain, I dared not think what I should have felt.

But by the time my automobile had turned into the Avenue Hoche I remembered nothing but the eyes, the smiles that were waiting for me. My duty was, as my mother had said, fulfilled and completed; now at last the time had come to gather my reward, in the golden summer months of vacation toward which I stretched out my hands like a young girl returning home from her convent.

And, as usually happens to the young girl, my first taste of the promised delights was no more than a disappointment. At the door of my mother's apartment I was met by none other than that lady herself, fresh from the hands of her maid and speaking in awful whispers. She nodded her little curled head in the direction of the salon.

"Hush, they are in there!" she whispered. "Come into my bedroom, *chérie!*"

As the hour had not yet struck for the arrival of the dinner-guests, I was bewildered to guess the identity of these new and unwelcome intruders. Then mama, safe behind the closed door of her bedroom, flew into a passion of vexation and perplexity.

"Your Aunt Lucy and Claire," she cried, "back from England, condescending to seek reconciliation with their wicked little outcast of a relative—that's me! Was ever anything so unfortunate?"

"My dear little Claire!" I turned toward the door, in my haste tripping over the yellow lace train of my gown. My mother seized my arm. "No!" she cried. "Wait a moment; help me to decide what is to be done. As you know, my little dining-room seats ten persons—at a pinch, twelve. And to-night, being the last night of the season, I have squeezed in fourteen! I should have no room for the Holy Father himself if he paid me a visit from Rome. And here's your great fat Aunt Lucy, to say nothing of that tall monster of a Claire!"

I shook my head in perplexity—the dilemma recalled so well our difficulties of the old days. And then, just as in a play, the telephone at the head of my mother's bed rang out a sudden summons. Her exclamations as she answered it were those of regret, but her eyes expressed a delighted relief.

"That dear Henri!" she breathed

gaily, as she restored the little apparatus to its place. "He finds himself detained at the war office, in order to complete his correspondence for his departure on *permission* to-morrow. He will join us later—we shall miss his presence at dinner, my brave boy! But do you not see his absence removes half my perplexity? And for the other——"

She paused and hesitated, while a sudden idea came into my mind. Henri absent, what pleasure should I have, indeed, in the proposed gathering? "Then I, dear mama," I responded, smiling, "will remove the other half. With your permission I will return home for a farewell dinner with Monsieur Duclozac before he takes the nine o'clock express for Vienna. Later I will return, and the rest of our plans we will carry out as we have made them. If you wish to take our new guests with us to Deauville, mama, remember that there is more room in the Mercedes than in your dining-room."

On my way out I paused in the salon for a word with my dear little cousin, now grown into a great tall girl with blooming English cheeks, but with all her old adoring sweetness of manner.

"My darling Yvonne!" she cried, as she smothered me in her timid embraces. "How often I have dreamed of this moment, and now to see you again, so well, so beautiful, a real *grande dame!* Do you know I am afraid of you, my own Yvonne!"

From Aunt Lucy I received no such compliments; but in the chilly graciousness of her manner I read the fact that my highly respectable marriage had reinstated the frivolous family of D'Hortisols in the good graces of this serious English lady.

"I congratulate you, my dear niece," she was good enough to say, while those fishy gray eyes of hers, beneath her awe-inspiring hair-ornaments of black jet and plumes, ran up and down my yellow dress, and through and through my morals. "I congratulate you, my dear niece, on the good fortune—deserved, I am sure—which it has pleased a bounteous Providence to bestow upon you. In England, I can assure you, your mother might have maneuvered her cleverest without ever getting such a chance as this"—and she condescended to smack her highly respectable lips, ever so little, on the goodness of the chance—"or, in fact, without any chance at all. What with the colonies and the American girls taking off all our best young men, our poor English girls have no outlook at all. Ah, if Claire——" And she shook her head in ponderous regret at her unfortunate little daughter, who blushed pinker yet and held her head down.

Poor little Claire! It was plain that if my life was not indeed the bed of roses that they imagined it, that my relations were not without their share of perplexities and distress. And at that moment, even in the midst of my own private problems and excitement, my mind began to busy itself with the grand question of an eligible marriage for my little Claire.

"And now," I cried, "I am dining at home, you see. Later in the evening I return to join you. Au revoir, my aunt—good appetite, my little Claire!" And I almost ran into the first arrival of my mother's guests as I flew down-stairs again to my car.

I was glad, indeed, of this respite; glad of the chance to compose my whirling thoughts and cool my hot cheeks before I met face to face the great and perilous bliss which was waiting for me.

"I shall want you again," I said to my chauffeur, "at ten o'clock." And I turned to the great door, which, to my amazement, stood open to the street. The foyer was empty, not a servant was to be seen. Seriously annoyed at these signs of neglect in my supposed absence, I flounced up the wide staircase in a rage, intending to ring the whole staff of servants up to my rooms and call them severely to account. Monsieur Duclozac had no doubt departed. Even so the house was strangely deserted, strangely still.

In the upper hall I paused for a moment. I caught myself listening—listening I knew not for what; but the

silence, like the repose of a taut harp-string, seemed pregnant with a quivering and foreboding life.

Suddenly at the other end of the half-lit corridor I saw a group of servants waiting motionless beside a closed door, the door of my little Remy's nursery.

Hardly knowing what I did, filled equally with a blind desire to know the worst, and with an equally fierce necessity to hide my intrusive, recreant presence from all these eyes of my household, I fled with noiseless panting haste to my boudoir. From my bedroom adjoining there was a door leading to the nursery, where, unseen, I could for a moment play the guilty spy—as, indeed, to what other part had I a right?

The door was slightly ajar. Holding my breath and wrapping my betraying silks closely about me, I pushed it cautiously. There by Remy's little bed sat my husband, his old face older still since I last had seen it; his square jaw fixed in lines of a rigid misery. Beside him, his watch in his hand, stood the familiar figure of our physician; while the nurse, Marietta, wiped from her broad red face the tears that poured in silent rivulets from her honest eyes.

For a moment the little group lit by the pallid rays of the night light in Marietta's hand burned itself into my brain; while my ears strained themselves greedily for some sound from the little unseen shape which formed the center of the group. I took a step forward into the room; had the watchers not been deaf and blind to all outside life they must have seen me standing there before them—a garish, bediamonded figure, the outward mask of a soul divided, by its own sin, from all right to partake in that sacred, sorrowful vigil.

With noiseless steps I turned and fled away to my own rooms. Was my child yet alive? That question which I dared not ask of my household I dared not put to myself. Wandering restlessly up and down through the familiar darkness I counted the hours till that one should arrive which brought the returning light.

And with the light, what?

X.

Of that night which I passed alone in the darkness of my boudoir I keep only confused and broken memories. My first action, unconscious and inevitable as that of an automaton, was to pick up my telephone and countermand my order to my chauffeur to return at ten o'clock. Then, laying down the little glittering toy, a thought came to me—a thought which during the past ten minutes had been for the first time in months banished from my mind.

What should I say to Henri? Was it permitted, by the mysterious powers which held my baby's life in the hollow of their hand, that I should speak with Henri at all, even to say good-by?

Good-by!—that was too much to be expected of me yet! Two such blows, falling one on the top of the other, were more than even the powers of life and death themselves could expect me to support. I would call up Henri at the war office, where I knew that his work still held him. I would explain to him my absence, the unspeakable misfortune which threatened me. I would say good-by—good-by, at least, for a season.

I hesitated a moment—the number of his telephone at the war office was given me, I knew, in the letter which he had sent me earlier in the day; that letter so sinful, so dear—yes, so dear that even at this moment I could not wholly resolve upon turning my back upon its beloved writer.

With trembling hands I lit my little electric desk-lamp and searched among the ordered papers for the sheet in Henri's upright black handwriting. Was I glad or sorry that it had vanished?—whisked away, probably, in one of the trunks which even now were rattling on their road to Deauville. In any case, the powers which to-night had taken my life into their remorseless grip had at this point as well taken the choice out of my hands. To-night, at least, it was impossible that I should speak with Henri! There was, I knew that well, no use in telephoning to his apartment. But, after all, would not his valet have

his master's official call-number? With a trembling hand I picked up the receiver. In the next room there was a muffled step, a door that continuously opened and closed. In a sudden revulsion of horror I flung the little instrument of temptation back upon its hook. In the looming presence of death himself, what was I thus to play with life?

I rose to my feet numb with foreboding, dizzy with shame. All the forces of my nature, it seemed to me, drew me toward that soundless, mysterious room where my little child lay and suffered I knew not what. Yet with the stain of this last temptation upon me, how dared I go and kneel at that sinless bedside—with the flame of this forbidden love scorching up my heart, how dared I face my husband's kind eyes?

And yet—was it so strong, after all, this love for Henri which I had cherished more fiercely than the life which ran in my veins; this love which, springing up in the innocent passion of girlhood, had in these last months interpenetrated the very pith and marrow of my soul? Was the indulgence of this love, after all, so justifiable as my poor little mother's gay and cynical philosophy would have had me believe? In the yearning sorrow, the helpless shame which now held me prisoner within the four black walls of my solitary room, the soul within my soul, hitherto silent, made sudden and immutable reply.

My little Remy! whom till this night I had looked upon as a quaint and agreeable accessory of my life, as the outward symbol of the fulfilment of a wearisome bond—now in this dark hour it was revealed to me that the mother's love, which I had found so pretty and so appropriate in the theater, or in peasant mothers before their cottage doors, was as biting, as vital a personal fact for me—for me, Yvonne!—as I had found love to be—as some day I should find death himself. I, who had given into strangers' hands the care of this frail little life enkindled from my own; I, who this very evening had so lightly dismissed him to the Auvergne, and of my own free will given up a whole month of his precious baby life!

The telephone bell upon my desk tinkled lightly. Mechanically I answered it. My mother's voice greeted me. The party was waiting for me, the bridge-tables were forming—was I not yet upon the road? I made some incoherent reply about finding my little son indisposed—about the morning's plans I could say nothing. I could hear mama's gay, unbelieving little laugh; and her words: "Hold, she plays the devoted mother, our little Yvonne!" Then: "Who do you think is here beside me, *chérie?* Come—you may speak with him a moment, this dear Henri!"

For the second time I pushed temptation away from me. Then as the insistent little mechanism, which respects no privacy, and takes no denial, rang shrilly to reclaim my attention, I smothered its tones angrily and desperately on the velvet cushions from my sofa.

While still busied in this childish employment, fumbling in the darkness, I heard slow steps coming down the corridor. Through the crack of my slightly opened door I beheld a strange procession—two of our men servants bearing between them a large copper boiler of steaming water; and behind them, her arms piled high with rolled linen, a white-clad nursing sister. The door of the nursery closed behind them; and a few moments later the air was filled with the ominous fumes of chloroform.

And I could do nothing for him; nothing at all! I acknowledged the justice of the punishment, so far as my sinful self was concerned; but that that soft little body in the room beyond should be twisted with pain and cut with steel knives, because I, the mother who had undervalued him, had failed in her duty—there was the point against which my soul rose up in rebellion. If in my own proper person I had been punished for my failure in kindness and in honor! The point of view was doubtless egotistic; but the appalling coincidence, falling with such finality upon my premeditated sin, recalled to my awe-struck soul the tales of Sister Angélique in the convent; of the old days when God had spoken directly with the chil-

dren of men. And in the present sufferings of my little child, I could see nothing else but the price of his mother's sin.

Very well! that being so, there was only one way to buy him back again. I had been told that God was kind, I would try if He was just. With a demand of something for nothing I would not approach Him, for the sacrifice demanded of me seemed so inestimably great that I should have paid Heaven in kind even for the grace that I demanded.

I kneeled upon my prie-dieu under the smiling image of Saint Veronica unseen in the dark. My prayer was perhaps a little grotesque, but at such a moment there are no disguises of stained-glass window and incense between the soul and its Creator. So for the first time in its life my soul became articulate and spoke my poor little maimed, twisted soul.

"Dear God," I said, "you see before you a poor little Parisian, born by your decree into a society which acknowledges no duty but to be amusing, and no responsibility but to be chic. You allowed her ears from childhood to be filled with maxims which left her quite bewildered in choosing between right and wrong. You condescended to endow her with a measure of personal attractions, which might make her an object of affection to the eyes which looked upon her—you threw in her way Henri la Guey, a man whom no woman could resist. But, nevertheless, she is not yet so far gone in sin that she cannot in honor and faith draw back again; and she pledges you her poor little word of honor, dear God, that she will renounce Henri's love forever, if only Remy may not die—if little Remy may not die!"

In all this petition, you notice, not a word of my poor husband, and the duty which I owed to him—not a word of my conduct in respect to Henri should my condition not be fulfilled. It showed how true, indeed, were the opening sentences of my confession that at such a moment I tried to drive a bargain with the good God!

XI.

In these summer nights the dawn comes early; but nevertheless it seemed long, very long, before the flowered chairs and little white piano of my boudoir took gradual shape and emerged out of the darkness. In a long gilt glass before me I watched the slow mirroring of a motionless, huddled heap in the corner of the room, which gradually in the growing light showed the draggled laces and haggard eyes of Yvonne.

Also I watched the doors of the room. But in the numbness which comes of long self-repression, I had long since lost the will, almost the desire, to rise and open one of them in the inquiry which sooner or later must be answered. My little Remy—was he alive or dead?

The birds woke iu the trees of the park outside my window, and raised their morning chorus of chirrups and coos. Over the asphalt of the road beneath beat the horses' feet, bringing in the army which supplies the daily needs of Paris. All around me the city, the house in which I sat, woke to its daily life—while I, the miserable little outcast whose sin had perhaps brought death to her harmless child, whose presence near him was unsuspected, unheeded, and undesired, sat idly watching the glints of light which the morning sun struck from the diamonds in her hair!

Suddenly there was a step in my bedroom—a slow, heavy step. I held my breath. It was not, at all events, my husband whom I heard moving there beside me; for he, in spite of his years, moved always as alertly as a boy.

The door from the bedroom into the boudoir opened slowly. I sat silent, huddled, staring at the shadow of the opening door as it crept heavily along the floor. Then I raised my eyes. It was my husband, Monsieur Duclozac, who, bowed and wan, shuffled wearily into the room.

For the moment in which, not perceiving my unexpected presence, his face was turned toward me in the self-

revelation of solitude, I read the sentence which the Fates last night had pronounced against us. In those drawn lineaments, those fixed eyes, there was only one message for me—little Remy was dead.

In spite of myself, at this confirmation of my worst fears, the rigidity of my locked lips was broken in a sudden harsh cry. "Louis, tell me! Is Remy alive?"

My husband turned slowly till his eyes met mine. He wet his lips once or twice as though to speak; then raising his shaking hand, in a curious reversion to boyish traditions, which showed how deeply he was moved, he made the sign of the cross.

I heard a jangle of hysterical laughter which, to my surprise, seemed to be coming from my own lips. I sprang toward him. "I'm not a ghost, Louis," I cried. "I am your wife, Yvonne, here in the flesh. Tell me, is Remy dead, and are you afraid to tell me?"

He shook his old head wearily. "Remy is alive," he answered. "The operation was successful, and the doctors have little doubt that he is safe."

"My dear!" I cried, while I felt my eyes swim in the healing wetness of tears. "My dear, my dear!"

I turned toward the nursery door. With a touch of his unsteady fingers upon my bare, cold arm my husband detained me.

"Yvonne," he said gently, "I do not understand. I would not have you telephoned for last night, as I had no wish to cloud your young gaiety with useless anxiety. And now—I find you here. You are come in for a moment for a change of toilet before you start on your trip for Deauville?"

I felt the tears start again from my eyes. "I have been waiting here all night," I answered slowly. "I changed my mind, I am not going to Deauville, after all. And then I smelled the chloroform, I didn't dare—I didn't dare——"

My husband listened gravely to my faltering accents. "You didn't dare," he supplied the lack, "come to your sick child?"

In desperation I seized the first excuse that came to me. "I can't bear," I murmured weakly, "to see anything horrid happen!"

In a grave caress my husband took my hand in his. "Poor little child," he said kindly; "my poor little chilly Yvonne, don't think that I am blaming you. But it would have spared me something, dear—it would have spared me something if I had had you by my side last night!"

A few moments later we stood together over Remy's little cot. He was still pale from the chloroform, but his lips were parted in a little smile, the treasure! and from between them the breath came peacefully. I kissed him softly upon his closed eyelids.

Suddenly I felt my husband's eyes upon me. Looking up at him, it seemed to me that his face was wonderfully changed from the haggard vision which a few moments before had burst into my boudoir—the self-reliant strength had crept back into his eyes, the grave tenderness into his smile. And for that moment grace was given me to see past the awkward, outward form, with its short, thick neck and wide stomach, which confronted me, to the nobility which shone from the small, deep-set eyes looking into mine.

With a slow gesture he took my hand and held it over our baby's little sleeping form. The sister sitting by the window counted the beads of her matins, and gave no sign of perceiving this display of human tenderness.

"My Yvonne," he said softly, "here and now I wish to make you acknowledgment of the fidelity and love with which you have kept the sorry bargain which was forced upon you in changing your youth against my years. You have given me the happiness of my life; you have given me this little boy. Last night in my distress you were near, beside me, suffering with me, though I did not know it. You have given up your gay month with your mother and her friends in order to stay at home with an old man and a little boy. I kiss your little hands, my dear, and thank you for your love and loyalty!"

As he bent over my hands across the child's little, quiet form, I noticed that his poor head shook with fatigue, and his voice, in spite of its heroic cheerfulness, drooped wearily. I swallowed the spasm of shame which constricted my heart at his undeserved praise, and forced myself to speak.

"You must lie down and have some sleep, my poor dear," I cried, with a regretful and tardy thought, "this terrible night has worn you out. Here in your dressing-room! I will darken the windows myself, and bathe your head with your favorite toilet water."

A few moments later, with grateful protestations, my husband had laid his heavy head upon the cushions which, with anxious attention, I heaped up for him. I drew the dark velvet curtains. I turned to the leather dressing-case which, ready packed for the trip to Vienna, stood still waiting by the hall door.

The water of Night-blooming Cereus! Was it in this silver-topped bottle or in this? With careful hands I rummaged through the glittering and ordered recesses of the bag. What was this folded paper that flew out to my touch, tucked away carefully beside the square glass bottle which, at last, rewarded my search?

I picked the paper up to return it to its place. Something familiar, either in texture or in character, caught my eye. With fluttering fingers I spread the closely written sheet out flat upon my hand. It was yesterday's letter from Henri, in which he made passionate acknowledgment of the rendezvous which I had given him at Deauville—the same letter which, in a vain search for his telephone number, I had frantically sought last night in my desk. So I had not, as I thought, packed it inadvertently in one of my departed trunks, but had carelessly dropped it, where it might creep in, like an adder, to poison my husband's peace. So he had read them, the sentences which stared up at me from my hand: "My dear, dearest Yvonne!—*à bientôt*, till Deauville—at last, at last, my little adored one!" My husband had read those words; all through this night of torturing anxiety, when he believed his child dying, when he believed his wife departed on a journey which had as its end his own base betrayal, those words had been present in his brain as they now burned themselves into mine—yet he could welcome me home again without a question; he could address to me the words of love and trust which even now I had heard from his lips!

With an involuntary gesture I turned toward the sofa. In the closed eyes of Monsieur Duclozac, in the soft regularity of his breath, I read the healing of a sudden slumber as profound and as innocent as that of the child in the room yonder.

Oh, my husband! Not as the unwilling price of Remy's life—not as the sacrifice to a cold and unwelcome duty, but for your own dear and honored sake behold me here beside you for the rest of my days your faithful and loving wife!

XII.

It is easy to make good resolutions—as easy, my faith, as making one's confession on Ash Wednesday. But it's being good during the long, long days that follow—as my mama used to say over the meager Lenten dinner of fish and boiled eggs; she detests boiled eggs, poor little mama!

How often in those long weeks in the Pyrenees which followed my little Remy's recovery; in the long, sunny afternoons while Monsieur Duclozac took his siesta, and the little convalescent dozed tranquilly upon Marietta's lap; or in the longer evenings while Monsieur Duclozac and I played at bezique together, and the band made music in the square beneath our windows—how often did I crush back a yawn and whisper to myself "Boiled eggs!"

Then what shame, what good new resolutions! Was I so soon to falter in my loyalty to the kind old man whom once I had dared to despise as bourgeois, but who since then had shamed me with a nobility which

Bayard himself need not have disdained? But, oh, the vista of days and nights which, like a gray and dusty road, stretched endlessly before me into the future!

As I had once owned to the good God, I am at heart very weak, very wicked; for this business of being good, which I had gone about with such good will, was like a heavy cloak of horse-hair, which pricked my skin cruelly, and which, with all my best efforts, slipped away now and then from my shoulders. And in spite of my prayers and the thoughts of my husband's goodness with which I tried to fortify myself, I was perpetually conscious of one abiding terror; if the unseen rulers of the world should some day order the mysterious force of coincidence for my evil as once they had ordered it for my good—if some day in one of the dark hours, when the mantle of my defense had fallen from me, temptation and opportunity should meet me face to face!

In short, if I should see Henri again! There was the dread which—all the more appalling because fathered by a furtive, undying wish—haunted my waking hours and even my sleep.

And yet to be securely rid of that danger by the means which my mother's letters threatened—that is, by Henri's voluntary self-exile to Africa—there was an alternative from which, as at its first proposal, my heart shrank in terror.

From Henri himself I had heard nothing; for in the first gust of my good intentions I had returned all his letters unopened. Of his disappointment, his despair, I received full accounts in the bitterly reproachful letters which my mother sent me from Deauville. The house-party, it appeared, had been completely ruined by my voluntary and wilful absence. Poor little Claire had no appetite with pining over my loss, and found her only relief in discoursing over my perfections with Henri—which naturally made the state of affairs only more unbearable for the dear boy. Aunt Lucy was very cross because Henri wouldn't fall in love with Claire; and because with her lack of dot there was no chance of anybody else. However, it would not last long. In the autumn Henri would procure his exchange into an Algerian regiment; and *then*, of course, all cause for worry would *soon* be over. But if ever I could forgive myself!—etc., etc.

And after a letter such as this, a long afternoon under the green trees of the park, beside the nurse and the sleeping baby—was I very wicked, I wonder, when I clenched my hands and shut my eyes and whispered to myself "Boiled eggs?"

Oh, that constant, haunting fear that Henri was crossing the wide, white road behind me, and coming down the leafy aisle between the lime-trees toward my chair!

The first month of his *permission*, which he dutifully spent with my mother at Deauville, that fear was with me poignantly enough. But when August arrived, and in the annual maneuvers Henri came with his regiment—so I learned from my mother—to this very department of the Haute Garonne! Suppose in some feint of mountain attack his company should ride through this valley of Cauterets! Or if in some mood of savage and exalted rebellion, such as so often visited me, he should use his privilege of manhood in seeking me out, and demanding a face-to-face explanation!

Should I have for a second time the strength to resist? Looking into my weak, tormented heart I saw that my only answer to that question must be: I do not know.

So anxiously, fearfully, I began to strengthen my defense. And, acting with only too much joy on a slightly peevish hint given me by one of my mother's letters, I wrote to invite Aunt Lucy and Claire to join us here at this little mountain resort.

To judge by the alacrity with which the acceptance came back to me, the invitation was as gladly received as it was given. And when finally, with a full English paraphernalia of basket-trunks, portable bath-tubs, and plaid-covered holdalls, pug-dog and young daughter, my Aunt Lucy stepped from

the train at Pierrefitte into the motor with which I had come to meet her, I was amazed at the graciousness of her manner.

"Dear me," she said, "a motor-car! How very luxurious! Do you know, my dear niece, I had a long time conscientious scruples about riding in these things; till finally my uncle the bishop took to using the new electric cabs in London, and since then—— Besides, anything that costs so much money must be respectable, mustn't it? Yes, my dear niece, I never will deny that you have done well for yourself. Ah, if Claire——"

The quickening of the automobile's speed up the long hillside left her sentence unfinished; but I knew quite well, you see, what was in her mind. It was a topic, indeed, that was never more than five minutes absent from her lips. Claire's lack of fortune or of striking beauty, the cupidity of Englishmen, the exacting taste of Frenchmen, the stony indifference of Americans to all women but their own—the impossibility, in short, of marrying off a dowerless girl, and the terrors of old maidenhood; these formed the burden of Aunt Lucy's discourse. The disgraceful high-church tendencies, not to say Popery, of the little Anglican chapel at Cauterets, and the shameful waste of ribbon in Marietta's caps, were topics which could only for a short time distract her from the main subject in hand.

Poor little Claire! If I had pitied her before, I must, indeed, pity her now.

"If only," she replied to me one afternoon, as with little Remy between us we drove a slow course down the sunny valley; "if only my poor mama had some idea of the pain she gives me when she talks so of my failure to make a fine marriage. To be sure, I long ago made up my mind that my marriage, if it ever came, must be an affair made entirely to please my mother, and without any thought of my own personal feelings. But to hear it so constantly discussed, and to be afraid that, after all——"

She stopped short and blushed an innocent pink, then, stooping, she kissed Remy's soft curls beneath his flopping white frills of hat-brim. I knew what was in her pure mind, my poor little Claire, though the English prudery in which she had been reared made her blush at such thoughts so natural, so beautiful in a young girl. And more forcibly than ever I felt the happiness which I should confer upon some young man yet unknown—if ever I found one good enough—in bestowing upon him the hand of my little cousin.

Of her month in Deauville Claire talked endlessly. The gay, careless luxury of the place had evidently been a revelation to the poor child, after years spent in unwelcome visits at grudging English country houses, or in the suburban boarding-place which was all her mother's little jointure, even sunk in annuity, could procure.

Mama's brilliant, youthful looks, the intrepid pleasure-seeking of the whole party, had fascinated her. "But the one I liked best of all," she added artlessly, "was the Comte la Guey. We used to talk together a lot! And what do you suppose we talked about, Yvonne?"

"Yourselves, of course," I answered, while a curious little pang, hitherto unknown, wrenched suddenly at my heart.

"You!" — triumphantly. "You, Yvonne, dear, of course. You know what I think of you, darling! And as for Captain la Guey—if you weren't a married woman, dearest," she added, with naïveté, "do you know, I should really believe that he was in love with you?"

For a moment we were silent, then I forced myself to speak: "Nonsense, Claire. We are old friends, that is all. But Captain la Guey—he was well, Claire?"

"Yes, indeed, splendidly, though a bit quiet sometimes. But we had such fine rides together every morning after coffee. He had his horses there, you see, and he lent me the most divine little Arabian. And, do you know, he said I had the best seat, in leaping, of any one he had ever seen—for a lady, that is, of course!"

So it appeared then that, while my mother had represented him as heart-broken, he had consoled himself not badly with this fresh-cheeked young English girl, our volatile Henri. Then I choked back such unworthy thoughts. If anywhere in this world my poor Henri could find consolation for the wound which I, his old playmate, had inflicted upon him, was it the part of honor and of affection for me to begrudge it to him?

The news which I found on my return to my hotel showed me, however, with what gladness I should have welcomed the possible alternative which Claire's words had presented to me. In a few curt and indignant words my mother informed me of Henri's final determination to return to the Soudan, and his demand of a farewell interview with me, his old childhood's friend. And then my mother added bitterly:

> But, of course, you will refuse my poor boy this last request, as you have done all his others. It seems odd, does it not, that I, who drove his beloved father to his death, should now see the same little comedy reenacted in the persons of his son, and of my daughter!

In a rage of anguished perplexity I crushed the letter in my hand. Henri exiled to the Soudan under the conditions which he had before outlined; his long-drawn suffering; his death, perhaps, to be charged up to my most grievous fault forever and ever—no, that was more than my hardiest resolution could bear!

But, on the other hand, Henri in Paris, in daily attendance at my mother's house, with continual meetings, with unavoidable hand-pressures and smiles—in the eager longing, the passionate fear with which I heard the proposal of this single farewell interview, I perceived the deadly peril of such intercourse as that insured by a continuance of present conditions.

Suddenly from the road beneath my window a singing voice came shrilly up to me. I started to my feet—for a moment the illusion was perfect. Then with a laugh at my own simple-minded credulity I drew back again from the window; but my nerves were vibrating with the intensity of my fancied shock, my limbs were trembling, the palms of my hands were bathed in sweat. Yet the song was nothing but an old nursery rhyme with which Marietta sang Remy to sleep every night, and which now I heard coming up to me from the lips of a milliner's boy swinging down the street with his load of airy, coquettish boxes.

Au clair de la lune,
Mon ami Pierrot.

And for the moment I could have sworn that Henri's step was at the door, his voice in my ear, his dear brown head bent over my hand.

No, it was no use! While his departure for the Soudan was an alternative not to be discussed, still I perceived with crushing conviction that, without the forging of some stronger barriers between us, his continued presence in Paris could have but one disastrous end.

Suddenly an idea flashed upon me—an idea which, like the artist's last morsel of mosaic, clenched the whole disjointed scheme of things into one complete, inevitable whole. For one blind moment I paused for reflection; for a brief prayer for aid from any higher powers which might concern themselves with so frivolous, distracted an atom as I. Did I usurp the province of Heaven, perhaps, in proposing to lay masterful hands upon the destinies of others, and arrange them for the furtherance of my own feeble soul's safety? Did I err in snatching at the lesser vice of egotism as a life-raft to preserve myself from drifting into the black gulf of the Greater Sin?

But if, perhaps, the plan which I proposed were, after all, no device of the egotist—if perhaps it was only the voice of my own vanity which made me fear unhappiness for those whom I loved, in a destiny apart from mine! Yes, it was my vanity alone which said No. The first shock passed, my scheme promised only happiness, eligible comfort and happiness, for all concerned—for all, that is, except me!

The fact that this settlement of the

matter touched my heart with so acute a misery was perhaps to me the most convincing earnest of its rectitude. For in the convent, I remembered, goodness was always held out as not other than the path of self-mortification and penance; and what else, on my poor little mother's lips, had it ever meant to me? And for the rest, there was my Aunt Lucy, who from childhood had been held up to me as the personification of every virtue—and was any one ever more disagreeable than she?

Yes, my plan made me utterly wretched, so I knew that it must be right. I pushed away further thought, longer reflection—they stood only for a weak dallying with the pit which yawned so imminent beneath me. So, seizing my pen, I wrote off a desperate letter to my mother at Deauville.

Three days passed—three wretched, agitated days. Then by return of post came a response concurring in my scheme—as, indeed, poor little mama would have agreed to a plan involving the agency of Diabolus himself, in order to keep the adored son of her adoption beside her in Paris.

Then followed, in feverish haste, my interview with Aunt Lucy, who jumped for joy at the proposition; then with little Claire, who agreed docilely with all that her tremendous mother and adored Yvonne might propose. Monsieur Duclozac gave a kind and fatherly interest to the affair. If there was in his mind any lurking thought, any questioning suspicion, at least his goodness betrayed no sign.

Finally there was the approach to be made—through mama, who was all-powerful with him—to Henri. To her amazement he met the proposal first with jesting unbelief, then—on my sending him an imperative and imploring letter on the subject—with a languid and non-resisting acquiescence.

Meanwhile the months dragged on. For an affair of this kind, you understand, makes itself slowly. We returned from Cauterets to spend the autumn months in our villa in Touraine, Aunt Lucy and Claire accompanying us.

Then at the approach of winter the great house in the Parc Monceau was opened again to receive us. Our English relatives were again our guests. Mama came to us; Henri came to us. Arrangements for the forthcoming event were discussed, congratulations were given and accepted with a good grace. The first meeting, indeed, passed off very well.

It was plain the heroic and desperate remedy which I devised was going to work exceedingly well for all concerned—even for me. For, in those dark, shut-in days of early winter, spent for the most part in the nursery with my husband and little Remy—now growing so big that the question of trousers will soon have to be considered for him, the treasure!—in these tranquil employments, my life slipped calmly by. It was plain I was learning to accept my allotted diet of boiled eggs with a very good grace indeed.

Finally, just before Christmas time, the *Figaro* announced one morning to an interested world in the lists of "Forthcoming Marriages" — that of Mademoiselle Claire de Velnay, daughter of the late Vicomte de Velnay, and the Comte la Guey, captain in the Twenty-fifth Regiment of Chasseurs.

XIII.

The wedding was set for the first week of the new year; and all December was spent in the bustle so delicious for all concerned — except one! — between dressmaker and milliner, caterer and engraver. The invitations, issued by Madame the Vicomtesse de Velnay for her daughter, and Madame the Baronne d'Hortisols for her adopted son, provided for the religious ceremony at the Madeleine, and a large "lunch" afterward, at the house of the bride's cousin, Madame Duclozac.

Yes, everything of the most chic for our little Claire! This marriage which we are making for her, so lacking—or do I flatter myself?—in one most vital particular, shall fall short in not one single point where I can supply the need. And in the fulfilment of this af-

fectionate duty I have, it seems, my reward; for beneath the cloud of material accessories, before the binding and final realities of white satin and wedding-cards, the flimsy phantom of an immaterial, forbidden sentiment has vanished into the thin air, where it belongs. To Henri as the affianced husband of this most innocent, most loving of young virgins, I can give my hand with the calm consciousness of highly commendable conduct both toward him and toward Monsieur Duclozac. Beyond a doubt, it has worked admirably for all concerned, this plan of mine!

What is it he says, our delicious Belgian mystic? "Youth is when the future, age is when the past, predominates." If that be true, then of what an age am I? Older than my mother—who looks forward each year with the most palpitating interest to her New-year's presents and the new winter styles in ball-dresses—older than my husband, whom on one memorable occasion I declared to be as old as my grandfather. No, perhaps I am of the same age, after all, as my dear old Monsieur Duclozac. We are a very proper married couple, models of the *haute bourgeoisie;* devoted to our dear little son, who already is of an age to drive with me in the Bois every afternoon dressed in a little fur coat like a man's, the *chéri!* And for the rest, marrying off a young cousin with all possible chic to a wealthy and distinguished young captain of cavalry.

XIV.

The signing of the marriage contract was to be, as befitted the rank of all parties concerned, a very grand affair, indeed; and accordingly, on Christmas eve, our large state dining-room was filled with a gay and elegant company.

Everybody concerned, or who could possibly think himself concerned, was present; from the bridegroom himself, this evening particularly soldierly and debonair, with a support of elderly generals, friends of his father's, to a swarm of English relatives of the bride—serious clerical people for the most part; the gentlemen with collars fastening behind, the ladies with frizzly "bangs" down to their eyebrows, and tight-sleeved dinner-dresses of white wool.

There was one gay and chic young matron in pink, however, who seemed particularly attached to Claire, and who whispered much with her in the course of the evening.

"Where's Claire?" she'd ask, in her high English accents. "Claire, you perfectly divvy little duck, come into the corner and have another cigarette with me. I've just three more messages to give you yet!"

Nor did I notice that the sprightly confidences of this dashing "Miladi Jack," as she was called, seemed of a more encouraging nature than the overpowering admonitions of the white neck-clothed gentlemen. And all through the evening the bride's pretty pink face and brown eyes, at the side of Monsieur Duclozac, looked particularly timid and downcast.

In spite of this slight shadow—no more than to be expected from a young girl in her situation—the dinner passed off in tremendous style. Aunt Lucy, in a new black satin with a perfect avalanche of cairngorm pins and hair-brooches wandering over her copious bosom, ate and drank so much that I caught myself watching the black satin seams in a kind of trepidation. Like the champagne and the entrées, however, they held out bravely.

Monsieur Duclozac, also, was in great spirits, and did unaccustomed honor to the excellent fare provided by his famous chef. In response to the finger which I, smiling, raised to him from the other end of the long table, he gallantly lifted his glass of champagne.

"To the confusion of weak tea and tisane," he cried, with an unaccustomed gaiety; "and to your eyes, my little, adored wife!"

All present drank the toast with acclamation—even Henri. Then followed health-drinking, speeches, ending with a loving-cup, in the English fashion, to the health of the affianced pair—a toast which even Remy, rosy and blinking in his little flannel night-clothes, was

brought down-stairs to partake of from his father's knee.

Monsieur Duclozac had insisted upon the child's presence; he was, to tell the regrettable truth, just a little bit grotesque in his merriment, my dear and excellent husband!

"Behold us," he said loudly, "the model family group! And may you, my young friends, in all season be as happy as we!" In the shout of laughter that followed, Remy gurgled and kicked his fat legs with merriment, and the poor little bride fled in scarlet confusion to the protection of the giggling Miladi Jack beside her.

But when finally the company was returned to the drawing-room, and after our liqueurs we proceeded to the true business of the evening—then no longer, I can assure you, had I any reason to make apologies, even to my own inner consciousness, for my honored husband. How many men, even millionaires, do you think would be willing to dower a penniless little cousin-in-law with an independent income of fifteen thousand francs a year? Yet this is what he had done; all, as I knew well, out of his love and kindness for me, his worthless little wife. Independent of her marriage with a wealthy husband, Claire was now a rich woman. I own Monsieur Duclozac's generosity made me breathe more freely. After all, my scheme had not involved the burdening of Henri with an undowered and penniless bride.

So the contract of marriage between Claire Henriette Lucy Marie de Velnay and Joseph François Henri la Guey was properly drawn up by Master Hannetaux, my husband's notary, who, seated beside Aunt Lucy, had dined with professional discretion. The groom's *rentes*, the bride's income, were formally noted and written down. Provision was duly made for each of the children to be born; my Aunt Lucy, despite her years, coughed and blushed at this point with true British prudery.

The parchment, being duly drawn up, was now sealed and signed. Everybody, in fact, signed. First the notary, then the bridegroom; after him his adopted mother, the Baronne d'Hortisols; then followed the signatures of the bride's party—the tremulous signature of Claire herself, followed by the angular English scrawl of her mother, and the names of her two cousins, Monsieur and Madame Duclozac.

"And now," added Master Hannetaux, as, affixing a final seal to the date, he addressed the little bride at his left hand; "and now all that is left for you to do is to go to the mayoralty and to the church, madame!"

"Ah!" cried Claire, in protest against the new title; and the lawyer apologized with a laugh.

"A thousand pardons, mademoiselle! But, in fact, this business of the contract once completed, one may say with truth that the marriage has already made itself, my faith!"

So in conclusion we all made our congratulations, and saluted the young couple thus subscribed to each other. The cheek which Henri brushed perfunctorily against my own was, it seemed to me, curiously dry and burning. Involuntarily I turned my eyes to his; but his glance was averted, and the next instant I was pushed forward in the gratulatory line by his looming mama-in-law.

This ceremony completed, we rang for the automobiles. For it had already been arranged that the whole party should proceed together to the Madeleine, to hear the midnight mass with which Christmas is ushered in. There was great discussion, indeed, between my Aunt Lucy and the gentlemen with the strange collars, whether it would not be an encouragement of Popery to attend so outlandish a thing as a mass; and, while they were kindly silencing each other's conscientious scruples, I endeavored vainly to overcome my husband's resolution to remain at home.

His head ached, he said; he was tired—in fact, his day for *réveillons* had passed. The truth was, he had dined well, and looked with more longing toward his pipe and his library fire than to all the midnight masses in Christendom.

Why I so earnestly desired his pres-

ence at my side I hardly knew. But a little quivering dread, which at the touch of Henri's hot cheek had, for the first time in months, waked to assail me, rose up again and knocked at my heart.

"Don't stay at home," I implored him, with a certain wildness that made my own tone sound strangely in my ears. "I want you with me, Louis, to-night!"

With a kind though clumsy caress he patted the hand which he held.

"Au revoir, my little Yvonne—and do not forget to remember the old man in your prayers!"

XV.

The night was clear and frosty, the boulevards were ablaze with lights. The English people who had come in the Mercedes with me were filled with a condescending delight at the sight of Paris *en fête.*

Miladi Jack, on the back seat with one of the generals, smoked secret cigarettes and flirted noisily—mama, wrapped in white fur and with her faithful vicomte beside her, chattered in the best of spirits.

Only I, sitting with my chin buried in my muff, sat in silence and watched the flying red spark of the automobile in which the bridal-party preceded us down the boulevards. In spite of myself, a weight of foreboding lay heavily upon my soul. Was it all in vain, then, this intricate net that I had woven to baffle fate, and secure to myself forever the certain enjoyment of a stainless peace of mind? I had done my best, according to the poor lights that were given me.

But in spite of all my efforts, I had but to-night learned that Henri's touch was still, for me, full of mortal peril. In this my hour of weakness my husband had failed me, and feverish, silent, alone in the midst of a gay crowd, I sat helpless with fear—with fear, I knew not of what.

We pushed through the dense and fervent throng which filled the church to the places which Monsieur Duclozac's thoughtfulness had weeks ago secured for us. With some care in arrangement, I disposed myself at the far pew from Henri. And soon, first in the mere narcotic sweetness of the lingering incense, then in the rolling, majestic sweetness of the organ, my soul was conjured from its feeble earthly terrors to a mood more in unison with the beautiful hour and the thousand mercies which a kindly Heaven had given to me.

So, while we waited for the striking of the midnight hour and the beginning of the *réveillon,* I knelt down and prayed with what simplicity and fervor I could for the kind old man and the little child whom I had left at home; then with a furtive, troubled shyness, which even before the good God I could not wholly subdue, I asked His blessing on the young pair whose hands I myself, in a manner of speaking, had joined. Then I hesitated—dared I, after all, trouble Heaven with prayers for so faulty and wavering a creature as myself? I smiled to myself; if ever a woman had entered this place of worship in need of all the prayers that went up from it, it was I!

Suddenly, with slow, reverberating strokes the hour of midnight rang out. A ripple of suspense, of emotional excitement in which I shared, ran over the crowded church like the summer wind over a field of grain. The twelfth stroke ceased, and its vibrations were caught up and translated into waves of splendid melody, as over the kneeling multitude organ and voice pealed out together in the triumph of Christmas. And with head bowed I humbly thanked God that still, unstained, I might once more listen to the story of that Virgin Birth.

People, arise!. Sing your deliverance!
'Tis Christmastide, and your Redeemer comes!

And not only in the words, but in the soaring voice of the consummate artist to whom their expression had been entrusted the whole of that wonderful message was brought home to the kneeling listener's ear—its divine grace and tenderness, the somber tragedy which it foreboded.

Then suddenly in the great chorus

of boy's voices which answered the rolling, angelic bars, I heard a new thread of sound, which shivered on the instant my mood of glorified and wistful humility. "Noël, Noël!" sang the singers together, in thunderous melody that stirred the hairs on your skin and reverberated among the dark arches of the vaulted roof. But beneath those ravishing waves of sound, what subtle, discordant overtone?

"Noël, Noël!" came the glorious crash once more—I started to my feet.

"Yvonne, Yvonne!"

No, this time my ears had not deceived me. In place of the holy message of organ and choir, it was my own name that I heard, reverberating through the cloisters, through the music, through my own shuddering consciousness—my own name, but cried in what accents of poignant anguish, of bitter distress!

My Aunt Lucy, by whom I sat, pulled at my sleeve. In her face I read a proper disapproval of all indecorum in a church—even in a Popish cathedral.

"Are you ill, Yvonne?" she whispered severely.

At the face which I turned toward her I saw her start in sudden uneasiness. "You are ill," she whispered, in awful accents, "I told you, you know, my dear, that pâté de foie gras at dinner——"

"I must go home—I must go home at once!" I whispered back, trembling. And my aunt, who at bottom has kindness in her heart, applied a fat, green smelling-bottle to my unwilling nostrils, and nodded commandingly to her prospective son-in-law, who sat in the end of the pew behind us.

So it was Henri, after all, in whose car I returned home—the very contingency to which, only an hour ago, I had looked forward as the possibly imminent lure of incarnate danger itself. But now, unnerved and half-fainting from my recent awful impression, I sat by Henri's side as unconscious as though the whole gulf between the Seen and the Unseen lay as a barrier between us.

With all his old kindness he insisted upon helping me up the long stone steps to my door. At the pale and scared looks of the servant who opened it, I shrank back in this sudden confirmation of my haunting, unformulated fears. "Thank God!" cried the man, "madame is come!"

I sprang forward, while Henri stood motionless and uninvited in the doorway. "What do you mean?" I cried sharply to the valet, who continued to stare stupidly at me.

"We sent at once, stomach-to-the-ground, for madame," he said, "but we had not thought that in that crowded church one could find her so soon——"

In desperation I turned down the brightly lighted and silent foyer, whence the black-clad form of my *maître-d'hôtel* followed by the shrinking forms of one or two maids, advanced slowly to meet me. As in that other strange homecoming of a half-year before, a brooding atmosphere of unspoken calamity was over the house—not the atmosphere, indeed, whose shadow had an hour ago dimmed my uneasy and egotistic spirit, but a Presence more final, more terrible.

"Tell me!" I cried desperately; and suddenly I was aware of the imperative tones of Henri, speaking in short tones of command behind me.

"Do you not see you are killing madame with this suspense? Tell her at once what has occurred?"

"No more than twenty minutes ago, madame," responded the butler, with painful hesitation, "when I was passing near monsieur's apartments on my way to my own room, I heard suddenly a loud cry from monsieur's dressing-room. We hurried immediately to him, but it was too late."

The lights in their crystal scones reeled and danced like drunken stars before me. Half-unconsciously I felt Henri's arm under mine.

"Too late?" I asked stupidly.

The man nodded. "I telephoned on the instant for the doctor, madame," he answered, with a ring of genuine regret and horror in his tones. "But against an apoplexy, madame, what can a doctor do?"

He paused, then reading my mute question in my face: "Yes, madame, so monsieur the doctor said, when he arrived five minutes ago. A thundering apoplexy, *mon Dieu!* But with monsieur's build, and his constitution, what would you? After that fête dinner, so much richer than his accustomed repast—the dinner which I myself, alas! served to monsieur—to say nothing of the champagne which the doctor declares he himself had forbidden!"

"It is true," I murmured weakly; and I felt the tears roll helplessly down my cheeks. The thought which stung me perhaps most keenly at the moment was the undignified absurdity of the causes which had thus suddenly terminated a brave, generous, and laborious life. My poor Louis! he had loved me well, and I—yes, after I had come to know him at his true value, and in spite of all my weakness, I had loved him; how well, perhaps, I never knew until that moment, when I realized that hereafter I must face a world that was empty of my best friend.

Suddenly I felt Henri's respectful touch upon my hand, heard his voice in my ear. "Yvonne, I see well that I am no better than an intruder at this moment. Of course, if I can be of service to you, you will let me know."

The next instant the door closed behind him, and he was gone.

Supported by the servants, I turned my faltering steps toward the staircase; toward the silent room where, in place of a loving husband, for whose sake I had impassably cut myself off from all temptations of earthly passion, I should find nothing waiting for me but closed eyes and limp hands, which in charity and comfort would never be stretched out to me again. And beyond my natural sorrow at my sudden loss, I felt a painful shrinking from the ordeal before me. Never before had I looked on death, and my flesh stirred at this my first encounter with the Eternal Stillness.

Suddenly across my overwrought consciousness struck a little icy, half-owned thought. "Bertin," I whispered to the man beside me. "Bertin, it was what hour, you say, when this attack—when this attack visited Monsieur Duclozac?"

"A few moments after twelve, madame. For I remember I had just heard the hour strike from the steeple of Saint-Anne, and I said a few prayers of the *réveillon* to myself as I went upstairs—all foolish superstition, perhaps, but one never knows."

"You say, Bertin"—I cut the man short—"you say Monsieur Duclozac cried out as he fell."

"With madame's permission"—he murmured the servant's discreet accents in my ear—"there was but the one word on monsieur's lips as he fell. I may be pardoned the liberty? It was madame's own name, a name not to be mistaken. 'Yvonne!' he cried, like that, high and sharp, and then again (with a thousand pardons to madame), and then again 'Yvonne!' And then, madame, all was silent."

A moment later and I had no thoughts left for the marvel of it. For the servants and the useless doctors, withdrawing at my imperative command, left me alone with the quiet shape which once had been to me the loyalest and most tender of friends.

XVI.

The funeral was over: the house which behind its closed shutters had been in a feverish state of hushed and tiptoe activity was returned to its normal sunlit repose. And I, in a brief respite from interviews with mourning milliners, business men, and lawyers, sat alone in my boudoir with my little Remy on my knee.

His stammering inquiries after his vanished father had almost ceased; in spite of my resolution to keep my poor husband's memory alive in his son's soul, I saw how feeble, at that baby age, were the impressions of memory. "Poo' papa!" was all that he would say in response to my earnest talk. "Poo' papa!" and then: "Wemy want 'a' play!"

At last, wearied with playing, he fell

asleep beside me on the sofa. *He,* at least, was fat and rosy, and close beside me, the treasure! With him I need never feel alone, even though—even though——

No, I could no longer restrain them, my bitter realizations of what this freedom might have meant to me. In those first silent hours, any wandering ideas suggested by the termination of my marriage were quenched in the awful impression of its being dissolved. But now—now I could think.

I could think, you see. I could feel and realize what might now, in all respect to my dear late husband, have been my outlook upon life had I been content to let events take their own course, had I entrusted my life to the safeguards of my husband's affection, and such strength as it might have pleased Heaven to give me. But instead, I had thought to arrange events to please myself, to make my appointed path of virtue less rugged and thorny to my own precious feet; and with audacious hands I had interfered to regulate the course of other people's lives to my own liking. I had seized the scales from the hands of fate to adjust the balance after my own liking; and now behold with what wayward measure had the scales swung back to me!

Suddenly a little flurry of footsteps in the corridor without, a swish of skirts—I started up. There was only one person, indeed, who thus, unannounced, could enter my house. And sure enough, on the next instant the opening door admitted the airy, black-clad form of madame the baronne. Never had she looked rosier, or appeared to greater advantage than in the dashing black crape bows and filmy streamers which did duty as mourning for her late son-in-law.

All through the solemn formalities of the week her mien had been that of a most decorous solemnity. But now, as though relieved of strictly limited responsibility, she greeted me with all her usual energetic gaiety.

"My dearest child," she cried, after her usual affectionate embrace, "how well you are looking! There's no use talking, black is the tint to bring out the transparency of one's complexion. Only, you see, your poor, dear papa never gave me the chance to put it on. Ah, if *I* had had your luck, Yvonne!"

I stared at her. Was she losing her mind? But she rattled vigorously on.

"To be a widow—*real* widow, sanctioned by Holy Church—not a wretched straw imitation, as the Germans say, such as I have been obliged to remain all my life. And then your jointure, *chérie!*"

"Yes," I answered heavily. "Monsieur Duclozac was kindness and generosity itself."

"He was—but then you *earned* it, dear! But yesterday at the reading of the will, I can tell you my mouth simply watered—to hear the millions of francs flung about like so many copper sous! Then Claire's dower secured to her independently as a legacy, to say nothing of the very handsome remembrance to me, his poor little mama-in-law! Ah! he took thought for all, our dear Louis!"

I nodded silently. Money was useful to me, doubtless, for the sake of the little boy whose warm, yellow head lay upon my lap; and, beside, one must live. But beyond that, what advantage could these uncounted millions ever bring me? Mama smiled at me.

"And now," she said, "you will not deny, my dear, that a certain day, three years ago, I told you that you would find marriage, once incurred, an open door to all the delights and *agréments* of life—even though we dared not hope, at the moment, that your deliverance would come so soon. Ah, my dear, what a pity that, in spite of my advice, you were in such a hurry to marry off our dear Henri!"

I forced myself to speak lightly. "It's too late to speak of that now, mama," I answered, and turned one of Remy's damp yellow curls about my unsteady finger.

Mama shook her head and sighed. "Too late," she admitted, with a sigh. "Bah, was she of a stupidity to cut with a knife, this Yvonne of ours! And yet——"

I glanced up sharply. "What do you mean, mama?"

She shook her pretty blond head with a sudden dolefulness. "I have spent the morning with your Aunt Lucy," she answered indirectly, "arguing with her that as the breakfast here has to be given up, that it is only common respect to the memory of Monsieur Duclozac, who took upon himself so handsomely the rôle of the bride's father, to postpone the wedding as well. And if one could but delay it, that miserable ceremony——"

I tried to laugh. "And she says?" I asked, with attempted carelessness.

"What do you suppose she would say, this cat of a Lucy de Velnay?" cried mama, with a sudden explosion of her soft accents. "Now that she has fastened her claws in a millionaire for a son-in-law, does one see her relaxing her hold? Furthermore, it appears that Claire is very much in love—and, in truth, since this engagement she has been changed from her former merry self as only the grand passion could change her."

"Poor little Claire!" I sighed miserably.

"Bah! Your poor little Claire!" retorted mama peevishly. "What could it matter to us if the child loved Henri with the passion of Héloise herself? It is the settlements that are signed, the new *hôtel* that is bought in the Avenue Bois du Boulogne, the trousseau that arrives hourly from every dressmaking establishment in Paris—these are the chains that bind us! It is but this past hour that your Aunt Lucy displayed to me the bride's new traveling costume—a pale-gray tailor-made, my *chérie*, with a toque of rose-pink. Rose-pink, it appears, is our Henri's favorite tint. Bah, it made me ill, I assure you, like a jaguar who is eating cotton-wool!"

I felt the blood spring to my head, but I answered steadily enough:

"But perhaps, mama, it *is* his favorite tint!"

"And bread and butter," retorted mama; "his favorite diet! Very well, in that case his taste on both points will be gratified. Poor Henri! He came in himself, just before I left, to display photographs of the old château in Bretagne, where the honeymoon is to be spent. Claire's cheeks, I assure you, were sufficiently rose-pink at the sight! *Mon Dieu*, where the men are concerned, is it possible that a woman can ever feel an absolute certainty?"

"We will hope," I retorted miserably, but with a propriety which might have delighted Aunt Lucy herself, "that Claire may have that certainty!"

Mama regarded me sharply. "Since your letter urging this marriage upon him," she answered indirectly, "I have never heard him mention your name. After all, men are strange creatures! His father, despite his fidelity to me"—and she crossed herself piously, poor little mama—"yet paid milliners' bills for a year for Rosa d'Arc of the Variètés—and in Claire's innocent eyes there are, I own to you, a certain seduction. Yet if you yourself went to him, Yvonne——"

My cheeks burned hot. Was this, after all, the opinion that my own mother had of me? "No, mama," I answered quietly. "No, I don't think I could do that."

Mama sighed. "No, I agree with you that if what we fear proved true that your visit might turn out a trifle awkward. And, beside, even if he love you with the same passion as ever, what is there left for him, as a man of honor, to do at this late hour? For to jilt a young girl of family at the foot of the altar as one dismisses a cocotte, to compromise her for the rest of her life in the face of all Paris, that is a thing one does not do—that understands itself—least of all, his father's son," she concluded, with a certain pride. Then with an artless little smile she added:

"But perhaps his notions are not so strict on some matters as yours, my dear Yvonne. Perhaps, like me, he holds marriage to be the open door to the delights of life."

In spite of myself I laughed at the curious obliquity of my little mother's views. "Then, while Henri may not draw back from the contracting of the marriage vows, he may in all honor

break them once they are uttered? No, mama, Henri's marriage must be for us what my own should have been—separation, utter and final!" Words easily said, indeed; but they fell on my heart like the clods on my poor husband's coffin.

Mama rose to her feet, twitching her black, gauzy draperies and heavy sables about her. "Yes, your cousin's husband—I grant you the complication makes an awkwardness, even in the most chic of families. *Eh bien,* my child! the soup, to use a vulgarism, is of your own pouring; you must not make wry faces now the hour is come to swallow it. But, oh, Yvonne, Yvonne, why didn't you come to Deauville last summer!"

And so she left me. The day, to tell the truth, passed heavily enough. Master Hannetaux took up the rest of my forenoon with endless details of real estate in the suburbs, and a new investment in Russians. Then my new mourning clothes when they arrived proved, almost without exception, a misfit, with wrinkles across the back beneath which not even the most broken heart could peacefully beat. Then in the afternoon a drive in the Bois in the closed automobile, with Remy beside me; but that young gentleman having, I regret to say, stuffed himself with surreptitious chocolate just after lunch, was incredibly peevish and noisy as a companion. I was probably, if the truth be known, extremely peevish myself; for the great catastrophes of love and death having been met and faced, life seemed to have settled down into a round of petty vexations which it passed my poor strength to tolerate.

With the wine of life just beyond my reach—no, just within my reach, if I chose to stretch out rebellious hands and snatch the cup—it was hard to reconcile oneself to an interminable diet of the same boiled eggs which had for so long formed my sole fare. I was, in short, capable of making the final sacrifice with courage, but not with the good grace without which the best courage is but a diamond unset. Unlike my ancestors, I whimpered at the jogging of the cart which drove me to the guillotine.

The clock was striking nine as, after a solitary dinner, I sat down before the fire in my solitary drawing-room. The fire blazed brightly, and showed me, in the gilt mirror before me, an endless perspective of black, shadowy shapes, white faces, and large, heavy-lidded eyes. I surveyed the nearest reflection in a kind of idle wonder. Would she have the strength, I asked myself, to sit still here in the glass all the evening, and not wander off desperately to seek Henri, wherever he was, to be his own now, forever, as she always had been?

Suddenly the silence was cut by the reverberating thrill of the electric door-bell. I jumped to my feet—who could it be at this hour coming to this house of mourning? My mother would not return till the next day; and beside her, who was there but one who would thus come to me?

In that moment of intoxication, indeed, I forgot everything; my duty to my dead husband, to the living cousin whom all my life I had professed to cherish. For that tinkling gong, like a magical peal of bells, had transformed the whole world in one instant into a great enchanted flower, alive with an intoxicating fragrance, and with fire at its heart. In that sudden, blinding heat my carefully nursed scruples shriveled and vanished. For, after all, I loved and I was young.

The heavy curtain was drawn back. Dizzy with suspense, laughing aloud to myself for pure joy, I took two steps across the room to meet him—and as the curtains parted I saw only Claire.

XVII.

It was Henri, I think, who told me those strange and terrible stories of perishing travelers in the waterless Algerian desert, who behold, opening before them in the horizon, a vista of green, waving palms and sparkling water; they turn, they follow, and crac! the vision dissolves before their hot

eyes, only to leave them to a more miserable death at the last of it.

This was the story which came blindly back to me in the moment when I stood facing Claire's figure in the doorway. Some disappointments are surely so sharp, so cruel, that it appears as though the good God could have had no hand in arranging them. And until that moment it seemed to me that I had never really suffered.

Something of all this, indeed, must have appeared in my face, for my kind little Claire stepped forward with the careful tiptoe and exaggerated whisper which one uses in a sick-room.

"My darling Yvonne!" she cried, under her breath. "I am a wretch to have come on you like this."

Then as I, stupidly enough, continued to stand staring blindly at her, she forced me with tender touches back into my armchair, and stroked my hot forehead with her cool little hands.

"I ought to have realized," she murmured repentantly, "that you were not to be startled by people rushing in on you, without warning, at such hours, poor *chérie,* after all that you have been through." Her large eyes met mine with a touch of pitiful compassion. "He was so good, wasn't he?—even to me! And you loved him so much, just as—just as——"

I forced myself to smile at her. "Just as you love Henri—yes, of course, my *mignonne!*"

The little, kind hands clasping mine vibrated suddenly with a curious stiffness; the bright blue irids dilated and darkened till they appeared almost black.

"Yvonne, dear Yvonne!" cried Claire, with a sudden desperation such as I never had heard before in her calm English tones. "Yvonne, it's exactly that that I've come at the last moment to see you about."

I stared at her. Had her little head turned under its weight of joyous excitement? She continued in the same panting undertone, walking up and down before me on the rug and twisting her soft little fingers in merciless gestures of perplexity.

"What was there for me to do, Yvonne, when you were all—even you!—against me? What is there for me to do now? I had made up my mind, of course, long ago, that if ever a marriage presented itself which should please poor mama, and repay her for all the sacrifices that she has made for me, that I would accept it even if it were with the Shah of Persia himself! And when Henri came, so handsome, so pleasant—and *you* told me to marry him, it seemed all quite easy. So I said Yes. And now that the settlements are signed, and the cards out for the wedding next Wednesday——"

Into my stupid, bewildered brain a sudden light glimmered. "And now?" I asked slowly.

"And now," moaned the poor thing on the hearth-rug, wringing her unfortunate little hands afresh, "and now, with all those family people that came over for the wedding, comes word—you remember a girl that was at the dinner the other night—Kitty Harborough, Lady Jack Harborough, you know—that tall blonde in pink that talked all the time?"

I nodded. "Miladi Jack—yes, who could forget her?"

"I thought I had forgotten her," responded Claire miserably. "I'm sure I tried to! And—yes, I can own it to you, and"—her voice went suddenly very low—"and her—her brother, Pippy Lowndes."

I jumped suddenly to my feet. "Claire! Then there is somebody else?"

She bowed her flushed face, and the tears ran off the end of her poor little scarlet nose and splashed on the hearth-rug. "There's Pippy Lowndes," she answered, with a sudden desperate bravery. "Percy Lowndes his name is, but we all call him Pippy. Look! here's his picture!" And, fumbling among the black crape ruffles at her neck, she pulled out a gold locket at the end of a slender chain. "Look!" she said again, as with a gleam of shy pride shining through her tears she displayed to me a brave young face with large ears and honest eyes.

"I met him at Kitty's two years ago

this summer," she went on, her shyness gradually dissolving in the delight of unwonted confidence; "he was a second lieutenant in the navy, and, oh, quite poor, just like me. So what was the use thinking of it? And mama came swooping down on us—oh, the things she said to Pippy, and to me, and to poor Kitty herself, who hadn't done a thing, I'm sure!" She stopped to dab her eyes with a black-bordered square of mull, then went on with a fluttering resolution: "So Pippy went away on the *Fury*, on a two years' cruise to Australia. And I—I let mama do what she liked with me." She broke down completely now, and sobbed dismally.

As for me—*eh bien*, at that moment I dared not think.

"And now," I inquired, with vague curiosity, "your Monsieur Pippy is once more at home?"

"He's at Southampton," she wailed, "at this moment. He's got his promotion; he's first lieutenant of the *Minotaur*, a line-of-battle ship. And there he is now. After he heard of my wedding this month, Kitty says, he just shut himself up on board ship, and won't take his leave and come on shore even to see his mother. Dear Yvonne, what shall I do?"

"Perhaps," I suggested, with a vague hope, "if you spoke to Aunt Lucy——"

"But I have!" she cried despairingly. "I told her Pippy had come home, and she said nothing—she just turned and looked at me—oh, it's no use talking, I can't face mama's eyes, Yvonne! Poor mama, I shouldn't blame her; she's been poor all her life, and she thinks that this rich marriage will be like stepping into heaven! But what do I care for that? With Pippy's pay as first lieutenant, and all that money that dear, kind Monsieur Duclozac left me, we could get on *so* nicely." She clenched her fingers over each other in an outburst of rebellious grief. "But then, you see, there's this wedding on Wednesday!"

Through the confusion of my whirling thoughts I tried to face the situation; for the time, indeed, was short. "Of course," I assented hopelessly, "your mother would never consent to breaking it off."

"And I should never have the courage to disobey her—don't despise me, but I'm a coward, Yvonne!" Claire interrupted feverishly.

"And so," I continued, with a sudden thought, "if I were you I should go straight to Henri——"

"You'd go to Henri," she cried sorrowfully, "and say: 'I'm sorry, I don't like you at all. I'm going to take back all my promises, and jilt you in the face of Paris!' Fancy my saying that to Henri, Yvonne, that dignified, splendid Henri, who condescended to fall in love with poor little me—think how he must love me, Yvonne, that he wants to make me his wife, and takes such pains to please me in everything. It was only this morning he brought the pictures of the old château in Bretagne, where we are—where we are to go after the wedding. And you think I can send him there all alone? No, Yvonne, I can't break my promises to Henri. And yet that poor little Pippy, shut up with my picture in his horrid little cabin, and all the other men ashore!"

At this dismal picture she broke down and cried afresh; perhaps it was because her vacillation threatened for me consequences which a bit of resolution on her part might forever dissipate, that I turned on her with a sudden sharpness.

"Then if your mind is quite made up on the subject, why in Heaven's name do you come to me?"

The poor child turned her swollen eyes upon me with so meek and pitiful an appeal that my heart misgave me for my harshness. "Dear Yvonne," she answered, with simplicity, "you are so good, and you have always been so strong and so clever, and I know that you have so much influence with poor Henri—I thought, perhaps, if you would go to him and tell him——"

The second time in this most eventful day that I had been bidden to go to Henri! I hesitated. Claire glanced at me timidly.

"Of course," she said, "if I tax your affection too much—if you'd rather not

go to poor Henri with such news—I must admit such despicable, crushing news——"

Her voice trailed off in an agony of shame, and I jumped to my feet.

"I do as you ask me, dear Claire!" I cried, in a voice which thrilled with a strange vibration in my ear. "I'll go to Henri this instant; there is, as you say, not a moment to be lost. And if the hour be a little unconventional, what does it matter between—between such old friends as Henri and me? And now you come with me, Claire?"

She shrank back with a scared, encrimsoned look. "I can't bear," she whispered, in almost the same words which I myself had used upon, oh, how different an occasion! "I can't bear," she said, "to see anything dreadful happen."

"Very well," I answered, with a determination which grew with the flame of joy which burned up fiercely in me. "I'll go alone—what do I care? Ring the bell behind you, Claire. And when my errand is done, I'll come and tell the result to you."

"It's not for nothing, Yvonne," the poor child said as she obeyed me, "that I have said my prayers to your photograph all my life!"

Five minutes later, wrapped in furs beside the chauffeur of the Mercedes, I skimmed along the frosty, brilliant streets on my way to Henri.

XVIII.

The servant who admitted me stared with an amazed curiosity, which showed me, in a subconscious realization, how loyal to his love for me had been my dear Henri's life.

"I do not know, madame"—the man answered my question doubtfully—"whether madame can see monsieur the comte or not. He is at home, yes, since five o'clock. But——"

"But what?" I interrupted, in an agony of impatience. With a mysterious gesture the man jerked his thumb backward toward a closed door at the other end of the warmly lighted, tapestried vestibule.

"Monsieur the comte is shut up in his library," he whispered. "When I knock at the door to announce dinner, to ask permission to mend the fire, I receive no answer from within. I own to madame I grow uneasy. But if madame desires——"

Henri behind that shut and silent door; Henri ill and in need of me; Henri dead, perhaps—who can tell what glimmering presentiments of dread went rushing through my mind as, shaking off the valet's offered attendance, I flew with wide-floating crape veil down the corridor to that door, shut like the lips of the dead?

I knocked—as the servant had foretold, no answer. I tried the knob—the bolts were drawn. I tried to speak, but who could give me words to say? With a sudden flash of deathless memory, those old days came back to me when I had sat, a child secure in youth and hope, waiting for the touch of young Love at my door, and the little whistled refrain that told me Henri had come to me. In those bright, far-off days, what dark vision had ever warned me that some day the door would be locked upon the other side, and that I should stand, a guilty and faithless Columbine, begging humbly for the entrance which my own morbid selfishness had forfeited?

At the farther end of the vestibule the valet still lingered. In spite of his presence, I raised my voice in a trembling breath in that deathless, forlorn appeal of the outsider:

Ouvre moi ta porte,
Pour l'amour de Dieu!

I held my breath—suppose nothing responded to me but a continuation of the same blank, implacable silence!

But steps came hurrying, stumbling over the floor within, toward me. The bolt clicked, and the door was flung open, to show me Henri's black eyes shining at me from the darkness of the room behind me.

"Yvonne!" he said helplessly. Then as his eye fell on my black weeds, and on the servant who stood discreetly behind me, Henri's manner was gathered

suddenly with the correct and courteous demeanor of the apologetic host.

"I beg your pardon, my dear Yvonne. But, you see, I must have fallen asleep there in the dark—and then your little song woke me up to strange ideas of ghosts coming back out of the past. Will you walk this way, into the salon, madame?—or I see that Simon has lit the lamps and mended the fire. Will you so far honor my poor library, madame?"

He spoke with a calm politeness which might be discretion, or which might be irony. So with a manner founded as closely as possible upon his own, I walked slowly into the room. One piece of news, however, this room held immediately for me. He had been lost in sleep, had he, this very calm and indifferent gentleman before me? But the velvet cushions of his sofa stood in a plump and undinted row, while before the hearth and the dying fire stood a hard, uncomfortable little chair of the Louis Quinze period—a chair in which one might sit and dream miserable dreams of a doubtful future, but never, never sleep!

The servant placed the logs daintily upon the fire and withdrew, silently closing the door behind him. This was the first time that I had been in Henri's house, and my solitary presence there at such an hour, under such circumstances, now first presented itself to my consciousness as a fact to be faced and accounted for.

"Henri," I began bravely, and then began again. "Henri!"

"Madame," he responded, with a courteous bow. It was not my old friend and playmate that I saw before me; it was the betrothed husband of Mademoiselle de Velnay. This fact, while it made it difficult, also made it necessary to speak. And, forcing my voice to the calm precision which the situation seemed to demand, I set myself without further ado to the task of detailing my recent conversation with the bride-to-be.

With eyes bent on the clenched hands in my black crape lap, with a voice which, in spite of myself, ran and trembled between fear and unconquerable joy, I repeated, word for word, the sad little story of Claire's hidden love.

"And as her mother refuses absolutely to countenance her breaking the engagement," I finished, "she came to me, her oldest friend, to beg that I use my influence with you, to implore——" In spite of myself I hesitated and stopped. Claire's petition, on the lips of her chosen messenger, was, if you like, of a certain sardonic quality. But, oh, could not Henri understand?

"To implore you," I went on desperately, "to release her from all her contracts and engagements with you!"

I had said it. The barriers were crossed, the obstacles at last, at last, were cleared away. I was very wicked, perhaps, but at that moment I quite forgot the garb I wore, and the kind old man who only a week ago had left me.

The fate which I had insulted had graciously forgiven me for my meddling, and had swept away the manacling web which I myself had woven. Henri was before me; I had come to him with joy in my hands, not only to receive, but to confer. At that moment of undoubting bliss, with eyes tight closed and breath drawn hard against my heart, there was all I knew.

Slowly I raised my eyes to meet Henri's glance of answering triumph. "But, madame," he said politely, "but how is it possible for me to release Mademoiselle de Velnay from her engagement with me unless she herself shall ask it?"

I stared at him, numb and bewildered. Was it possible, then, my half-shaped fears were realized, and I had made a mistake in thus coming to my old friend? "But she does ask it," I cried anxiously, "through me!"

He bowed politely. "Doubtless a form of request which honors the recipient. But I find myself in a difficulty as to the form of reply: 'The Comte la Guey, in response to the request conveyed to him through Madame Duclozac, has the honor to return to Mademoiselle de Velnay her promise to become his wife!' That is, perhaps——"

In spite of my nervous tension, or perhaps because of it, I broke into a laugh which caught painfully at my throat. Was Henri mocking me? That was unlike himself, indeed! And yet impossible that this attitude of his could be serious!

"No, no!" I interrupted his last suggestion with startled eagerness. "No, no, Aunt Lucy must never know that Claire asks to break off the marriage; she must never know that so much as a choice in the matter is left to the child! *Mon Dieu,* Henri, don't you understand? If Claire could face her mother with such a suggestion, where would be her necessity for sending me to you?"

"Then Madame de Velnay," he replied slowly, "must believe that I myself take the sole initiation in the affair in thus withdrawing at the last moment from my approaching marriage with her daughter?"

I nodded. With what new weight, I asked myself helplessly, was destiny about to crush the marplot who for an instant had once thought to usurp her scales? Whatever was in store for me was no more than I deserved, doubtless; and whatever it might be, it could not surpass the agony of shame which overcame me at that moment. I so secure in Henri's affection, in his delight at the news I brought him; I who at such an hour had sought him with such hopes burning secretly in my heart! My first wretched impulse at the rebuff contained in his tone was to rise, excuse myself, and withdraw as decently as might be. My second was one of mounting courage, to fulfil the embassy on which I had come, and fight Claire's cause—no longer, alas, mine! —to some definite conclusion.

"You have stated correctly," I replied, with conciseness, "my cousin's wish in regard to her mother's belief in the affair."

Henri arched his eyebrows. "And Paris?" he asked, "Claire's friends, my friends, to say nothing of the vast outward nebula of our acquaintance, here and in England? They are to behold Mademoiselle de Velnay, on the very eve of her wedding, publicly repudiated by her bridegroom, and bundled back to her mother in the face of the world? There is only one class of women, my dear Yvonne, that men treat in such fashion. And you ask me, Henri la Guey, to attach such a stigma to the reputation of a poor child, whose only crime has been her consent to marry me!"

The terrible thing was that he spoke the truth. And yet the truth had another face as flinty, as hard to dispose of. "But Henri," I protested helplessly, "Claire does not love you!"

"In that case," he replied imperturbably, "I shall have the misfortune to have a wife who hates me. A regrettable state of affairs—but unless she can find courage to face her mother with her decision of a rupture, I fear that there is no escape."

I thought of Aunt Lucy's granite jaw, I thought of poor, childish Claire weeping and shrinking in my arms just now. What chance had the will of the one against the will of the other? No, unless help and release could come from the other side, Claire must follow in my footsteps, and Aunt Lucy must have her millionaire for a son-in-law. Then as I looked in Henri's handsome face, on which the desert tan still lingered, with odd new lines and strange shadows which the last few months had printed there—as I raised my eyes to meet Henri's calm, inflexible glance, I saw that there was the last place of all to look for escape from the present intolerable condition of affairs.

I had, however, one more card to play—a card which I believed invincible, but which, indeed, I had not thought to use. However, the moments were slipping away, soon the matter would pass beyond all argument or hope. With a prayer to Saint Veronica to pardon me if I sinned against the memory of the newly dead, I rose and went to Henri.

"You are changed, Henri," I said, "if you can say No to *me!*"

For a moment I heard his breath come and go. Then as I raised my eyes to his, I saw them turned upon me with a new, inscrutable fire.

"It would be just as well for us both, perhaps, Yvonne," he said, in a changed voice, "if I *had* been able to say No to you!"

"And if you didn't then," I asked, trembling, "why should you now?"

He looked at me with a sorrowful sternness. "You once ordered me to see black as white, and I obeyed you, my dear Yvonne," he answered slowly. "Is that any reason why, simply because you have changed your mind, I should at your bidding be able to see it as black again?"

I trembled, conscience-stricken. "Dear Henri," I murmured weakly, "I did it for the best."

"Did I ever doubt that, Yvonne? And because of my belief in you, and my desire to please you rather than myself, did I not subject my will to yours in submitting to the separation which you decreed—even to consenting to this monstrous, this impossible marriage? It was not a very dignified part, perhaps, but who shall say that a man is less a man because he finds himself enslaved by some woman, and being enslaved, has no choice but to obey her most unreasonable whim? But I had wronged you, Yvonne, in dangling after you, in making love to you when I came home and found you married. I had played a mean part in persuading you to deceive the good old man whose wife you were—in spite of the maxims of the world in which I was born, I had honor enough to realize *that!* There are some points, you see, which one thinks out for himself lying out at night in the desert under the stars. So, because I realized the reparation that I owed you, because I was willing to give my eyes to save you from unhappiness, most of all, any unhappiness which I myself had caused you, I resolved to obey you, even to the point urged in your letter—the single line of your writing which I received after that June night when you refused to speak to me on the telephone. Look! here is your letter still!"

With a little inscrutable smile he turned to a desk of carved buhl wood which stood near his chair; unlocking a drawer and slipping an inside panel, he drew from its recess a sheet of paper, monogramed and folded, and straggling with lines of my own black, unsteady scrawl.

"See!" he said, with a little whimsical smile. "The commands of my superior officer. I keep it here, exactly why I know not, unless as a justification for myself on the Last Day, should an unforgiving Providence desire to examine too closely into the crowning weakness of my life. For it *was* weak of me, my dear, not to be able to say No to you! However, as you see, I have grown stronger since—and, beside, in your first request you did not ask me to throw away my honor."

So this was the way he received the matter! When a man begins to speak of his honor, there is no recourse left open to a woman but that of tears. I did not mean to do anything so banal, indeed; but in spite of myself, as I rose helplessly to my feet to take my leave, I felt the hot drops slipping down my cheeks. I drew my black veil hurriedly across my face.

"It seems odd, Henri," I said, in as steady a voice as I could command, "to think of what these past three years have brought us—love, marriage, death, to say nothing of your sudden rise to fortune and success. Fate has been busy with us, my friend. It seems odd, does it not, to think that not once, never once, has she tipped those wayward scales of hers in our favor. However, I am glad to see that you are able to take the whole affair at its true value, as a good joke. Au revoir, Henri!"

"Wait a moment!" he said. "Wait a moment, Yvonne!"

His voice sounded high and stern, and oddly changed in my ears, as I turned to face him. Before the look in his eyes I cowered in a sudden conviction of my own mistake, in charging him with a lack of seriousness.

"You find that I treat the business as a joke, Yvonne?" he said slowly. "And these last few months—yes, they have been for me of an excellent drollery, my faith! Though laughter, perhaps, is not so contemptible a refuge,

if therein one can find strength to support this life of ours. But it was not so last June—I swear to you, Yvonne, I found myself so ashamed of the mean part that I had played toward my oldest friend, that I asked for nothing but your forgiveness in those letters which you returned to me unopened from Cauterets. No"—he raised his hand as I attempted some words of stumbling apology—"no, don't think me so bad, Yvonne, that I was not able to honor you for your loyalty to duty, even though it took from my life all that was worth living for. I had made up my mind to relieve you of my presence in France, to go back to the deserts of Africa. When suddenly, like a summons of fate, came your letter."

His voice, though self-contained and level, vibrated with a sudden, curious thread which made me realize for the first time how deep and how unwarrantable had been the suffering I had inflicted. Slowly my eyes followed his to the folded sheet of my handwriting on the desk.

"Yes," he said, "there is the letter which commanded me, with my heart full of you, to bind my life to that of another woman. My first impulse, I will own, was to refuse with indignation. Then it came upon me with a curious, perverse delight, here was an opportunity to do something for Yvonne—and the more bitterly distasteful the form of obedience demanded, the higher the service and, therefore, the satisfaction. I hoped, perhaps, for something of the joy which the martyrs of our church knew when they thrust their poor hands into the hottest point of the fire. So——"

"Then, Henri," I interrupted him, with a sudden incontrollable joy, "you loved me then? You—you love me now?"

He looked at me. "What reason have you, Yvonne," he asked slowly, "for any belief that I could ever change?"

"And loving me," I cried pitifully, "you are planning to marry another woman, this very week? It is incredible—it is monstrous!"

"You should have thought of that, my dear Yvonne," he answered sternly, "before you took upon yourself the prerogative of fate, to weigh the lives of your fellow beings according to your own little measure—unless you made up your mind, like fate, to look, unmoved, on the consequence of your own decrees. Destiny herself, my dear child, cannot control the forces of life after she herself has set them in motion; so why do you expect to lead us all back along the track which you yourself laid out? Not that I exonerate myself from blame; it was lamentably weak of me, I own it, to subject my judgment to yours in so vital a particular. But I acted, like you, for what at that miserable time seemed to me to be best; and now all that remains for me is to carry with as good a grace as possible the burdens which I then accepted. I have acted weakly, I know; but God forbid that I should act like a coward!"

"Then you refuse," I asked, "to withdraw from this marriage?"

"I refuse," he replied calmly, "to see that there is left anything for me, as a gentleman, to do in this affair except to place myself entirely at the disposal of Mademoiselle de Velnay and madame her mother."

"At the disposal of my Aunt Lucy—yes," I cried, in dull despair. "Yes, we know how that must end, for you and for Claire; and for the rest of your lives, at Aunt Lucy's disposal, under her orders, like a little piece of dough under the hands of the baker's wife. My poor friend, I wish you joy of your mother-in-law!"

I broke off my words with laughter, because, looking into the eyes which Henri turned upon me, I could not be guilty of the triviality of tears. It was finished, I understood that well; there was nothing left to say. So we stood for a moment looking at each other, like the two lovers' phantoms meeting at their ancient garden rendezvous in Verlaine's sad little song; each one knowing that what he looks upon is no more than what he himself is—the ghost of youth, the ghost of love, the ghost of hope.

"Good-by," I said, "dear Henri!"

"Good-by," he said, "Yvonne!"

So I turned away to the door. "Don't trouble yourself to let me out," I whispered helplessly. "I can find my way out quite easily!"

But Henri stood still as a suit of armor in the middle of the floor, staring after me.

So I opened the door and went out. And face to face with me, so close to the door that our chins and hat-brims collided, I met my Aunt Lucy.

XIX.

"So it's you!" she said, breathing hard.

Her face was purple under the funereal plumes of her bonnet, while every bugle of her black jet mantle seemed to tinkle with indignant light reflected from her horrified eyes. Before the accusation of that grim glance I stood as I had so often stood in childhood, with head hung down in helpless self-accusation and dismay. Henri, however, faced the undeniably awkward situation with a better grace.

"Good evening, *belle maman!*" he observed, coming forward to greet her with a smiling and perfect courtesy. "I am, indeed, delighted at this honor—though you will own I cannot be blamed for my momentary surprise."

"Surprise—hum!" The indignant lady before him flung his word back into his face like a gauntlet. "If you are surprised, what do you think I am?"

Her cold eyes, with their stony accusation, traveled from me to Henri, then back to me again—such a look as only one woman can bend upon another; such a look as I myself may have turned, perhaps, upon some insolent *demi-mondaine* who jostled me in the foyer of the opera. And now to find such eyes bent on me, Yvonne! I shrank away in sudden horror.

"No, no, Aunt Lucy," I cried helplessly. "You must not think such a thing, indeed!"

"I beg, madame," interposed Henri, with dignity, "that you will attach no unpleasant meaning to this little visit paid by Yvonne to me, whom from childhood she has regarded almost as a brother."

The stern visage before us relaxed for an instant into an unbelieving titter.

"Yes, a fine story. So a brother turns crimson and a sister white when by accident they are discovered together! Thank Heaven I may be English, but I have some intelligence, and I have some *principles,*" cried the injured lady, rustling in great wrath; "and though my own dear late husband was the most moral of men"—I'll warrant he was, my poor uncle!—"though I had nothing to complain of on that score, still I have always realized as an English woman and a Protestant, what one can expect of this frivolous nation of Papists. You know it was nothing but my own affectionate weakness which made me consent, even for a single day, to my blessed orphan child's marriage with a Frenchman—the poor, innocent darling, too young to be married, anyway; and she never would have thought of marriage if she had listened to my advice, and to a Frenchman of all men in the world—but I was overruled, as I always am!"

She stopped for an instant in the utterance of her sermon to blow her nose loudly and wipe her eyes. On Henri's lips, as he surveyed the injured martyr before us, it seemed to me that I saw the ghost of a smile. As for me, I was too bewildered in shame and fear to perceive any humor in the address with which we were favored.

"But, thank Heaven," cried Aunt Lucy, "I still had my *duty* and my *religion,* and I resolved that no effort on my part should be lacking to spare my darling child the injuries that I feared for her, and which she herself is too *young* and *innocent* even to suspect. So in fulfilment of my *duty* as a *mother,* I have kept a motherly watch over you, Monsieur la Guey, when you least suspected it."

"Ah!" breathed Henri. If he had been red before, at least he was white enough now. Aunt Lucy surveyed him in triumph.

"If my suspicions had gone unjusti-

fied you might have some reason," she called out shrilly, "for putting on heroic airs and doubling up your fists at me, sir; but I will ask you to remember that to-night, when I drive down your street, I find an automobile standing before your door. I thought I recognized the chauffeur—a horrid beast, like a French barber, with his long mustaches—but I will admit that, considering the hour, I thought there must be some mistake—at such an hour, good heavens, what respectable woman?—but I remember we are not in England!"

"And so, dear madame," replied Henri concisely, "you remembered that you were not in England, even at such an hour, and condescended to honor me."

"In spite of my age, I own, I had a proper sense of the irregularity of such a proceeding, but for my blessed darling's sake—very well, here I have sat for the past hour, in spite of the efforts which that man of yours made to get rid of me, which only confirmed my suspicions. And now at last I find you out, madame! Though I am sure, considering *who* and *what* your mother is, and the way that she brought you up——"

"I beg, Aunt Lucy," I cried furiously, "that you will leave mama's name out of the discussion."

Aunt Lucy interrupted me with quite a series of screams. Poor Henri stood by with the face of helpless dismay which a man always turns toward a pair of combative women. Poor Henri! the sabers of a whole battalion would have been helpless against the militant virtue of this outraged lady.

"Very well," she cried, "I will do as you please. *Your* name, I am sure, is quite enough to discuss! You, with that dear sainted man not yet cold in his grave, and that poor innocent child at home sucking his little thumb and never dreaming where his mother is—but, ah, *I* have eyes enough to see through you and your motives in marrying your innocent young cousin to this man!"

"No, no," I protested desperately, "you mustn't think that!"

"I'll think," she cried out determinedly, "what I please, and what my own intelligence tells me! Ah, my dear Yvonne, I see it all now! You dared not hope for so speedy a release as last week brought you, when that poor, dear Monsieur Duclozac was called away to his reward in a better land. So as you could not hope to marry your lover yourself—and I dare say never wanted to!—you thought to secure him to you by marrying him to your helpless, innocent little cousin, who could never hope to dispute your possession of him. With your French blood and bringing up, I am not surprised; but I confess I did not know you well enough to suspect you until to-night, when I come upon you here! I thank a kind Heaven and my own *motherly devotion* that I am in time to save my child. Monsieur la Guey, your engagement with my daughter is canceled!"

I turned away. I dared not trust my eyes to meet Henri's. I heard his voice uttering words of cold and courteous submission, then Aunt Lucy's furious whirlwind of farewell.

"And now I go back to my dear, blessed, deceived darling; and to-morrow we pack our things and shake the dust of this frivolous, immoral country off our feet *forever!* As to my sweet Claire, I will see that her position is made unassailable by marrying her at once to one of her *own* countrymen, as I should have been firm enough to do in the first place. Husbands are not so scarce, my dear niece, as you seemed to think when you so kindly arranged this outrageous match for my child! There is, in fact, a gentleman, who may not be a count or a millionaire, perhaps, but of an excellent family, the brother of Lady John Harborough, indeed—however, we shall see. No, you need not conduct me to my carriage. I make you no adieus, to either of you! I send no parting message to your mother, Yvonne! I only thank Providence for my darling love's escape, and I have the honor of wishing you a very good evening."

So with a splendid curtsy and toss of her head she turned and left us. The door shut behind her nodding black

plumes and trailing bombazine; her heavy footsteps died away upon the stairs. Far away, as though from the far-hidden spaces of some quivering golden mist, I heard Henri's voice speaking my name.

"Yvonne!" he said.

I roused myself to speak. "No, no, I must go home now. We mustn't forget what she thought just now—we mustn't forget what we owe——"

A moment later, as seated in my automobile, I gave my hand to Henri's grave salute: "But when these months are past, Yvonne—then, at last, I may come to you?"

I looked down at him, and for a moment, in spite of the imprudence of delay, we looked into each other's eyes as we had done on that far-off day in the forest of Saint-Germain.

A moment later, as my impatient chauffeur whisked me around the corner of the street into the crowded boulevard, I turned my head to see Henri still standing there, bareheaded, under the frosty electric light, looking after me with a smile.

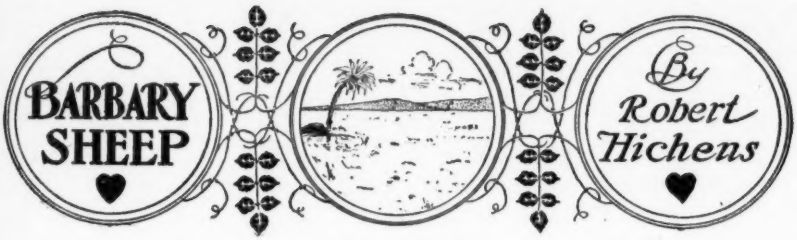
AN IDLER'S CONFESSION

ANOTHER summer wasted, gone,
And I an idler looking on!
From all the world's vast harvesting
I garnered up not anything.

And yet methinks I may demur
A bit, a little to aver:
I swapped a smile and traded some,
And killed an hour with a chum;
Mended a heart another'd broken,
Kept still the while I might have spoken;
Lost one sweetheart in finding two,
And to a dozen more proved true;
Rode with the rich, walked with the poor,
And lost the key to my own door;
I shunned the knave, talked with the fool,
And found the whole wide world a school;
Bade an old love a sad good-by,
(Would hearts were mended with a sigh!)
And, turning, much to my surprise,
Found a new love in two new eyes.

But summer's gone; this worded brief
Is just a playful hint of grief.

LEE FAIRCHILD.



XI.

AMONG the palm-trees near the red village that day there had been a violent scene between Benchaâlal and Achmed. The guide was in the Spahi's pay, and had been promised a sum of money if he would persuade Sir Claude to spend a night at the salt mountain.

This sum of money Benchaâlal had refused to give him. The abrupt return of Sir Claude and the guide had infuriated the Spahi, despite his seeming composure during the interview by the river at dawn. He knew how delicately balanced are the emotions of such women as Lady Wyverne; creatures of caprice, highly strung, changeable, slaves of their nerves. Carefully, cleverly, he had been creating about her a certain atmosphere, in which he moved against a mysterious background of desert, strangely, almost magically, touched with the romance of a barbarous and brilliant world. He had scarcely seen her in the day. He had scarcely wished to see her. By night their acquaintance had been made, by night cemented. The towering rocks had cast upon their fugitive intercourse black shadows, the moonbeams a maze of silver. The river had sung to them a nocturne. The wind from the sands had touched them with its thrilling fingers.

And the Roumi woman had been enticed.

At first she had been like a wilful child breaking bounds. But he had carried her on till the child in her, and its naughtiness, was merged in the very curious woman; and on again till the curious woman became the dreaming woman, the woman with wonder in her eyes. Just once he had shown himself in sunlight, and that almost meretriciously; with a crudeness of physical strength and determination, with a swiftness of skill, with a certain fierceness that was akin to the blinding sunshine. And then again he had stepped back into the darkness and called again out of the night.

And the Roumi woman had been drawn on, like the child by the Celestial's pigtail in the story, and had come very near to the hidden chamber where the desire of her lay in wait.

Trampling upon this delicate fabric, which the Spahi had woven thread by thread, had come the hoofs of the mules.

And Benchaâlal cursed Achmed, and refused to give him a sou of the promised money.

Lady Wyverne's terror was his foe. He felt sure of that. After the humiliation by the river's bank, when she had cowered for the first time in hiding, she would be set free from her dream. That was certain. Fantasy had been struck upon by the iron hammer of fact. And now the Spahi could not answer for the Roumi woman.

So he was furious, and he let loose his fury upon Achmed as only an Arab can.

From their altercation Achmed had gone hot-foot to join Sir Claude on his camping-out expedition. Although not long before he had been livid with anger, half-crazy with baffled greed, he

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was now apparently not merely calm but lively. He rode off by his employer with a smiling face, and, as Lady Wyverne had seen from the veranda, talking busily.

The love of money in an Arab is a passion of the heart, of the mind, of the whole being. Trick that love, disappoint that passion, and you rouse a demon that is curiously subtle, that is persistent and revengeful, and entirely without scruple. Benchaâlal knew that, but he had been careless in his fury. For a moment he had run mad. That moment had given Achmed over to Sir Claude.

Till they rode away together that afternoon Sir Claude and Achmed had remained coldly master and servant. The Arab had seen Benchaâlal's burnoose move when they came upon him by the river, and had divined the truth. But he had said nothing, showed nothing. Whether Sir Claude had seen what he had seen he did not know. They had ridden on in silence to the inn. At the door Sir Claude had dismounted without words, and had gone straight up-stairs. And Achmed had not followed him, but had remained below to watch for the return of the Spahi; for the return, perhaps, of another. And he had not waited in vain. When Lady Wyverne tried the door he had been there. Then he had gone to the stables, had thrown himself down and slept. Later Sir Claude had told him to prepare for a second nocturnal expedition. And now they were off.

Did his master know? He tried to read him with his one eye as he talked of Barbary sheep. Those hundred francs, spoken of near the salt mountain, must be in his pocket to-morrow; those and many others, enough to make him forget the lost money of the Spahi. His whole being was alive with determination to recoup himself. But when he looked at Sir Claude's hard face he knew he must be wary. For even the Englishman, who lets his women go unveiled, does not love to hear their names befoulèd by the lips of strangers.

"Look here, Achmed," said Sir Claude presently, "I want you to take me up into the mountain above El-Akbara to-night. The whole place is one mass of rocks, and full of good hiding-places to get a shot from."

"But monsieur cannot shoot at night."

"I didn't say I could. But I want to have a look at the ground. Then I'll come back to the camp and sleep for a bit, and go up again toward dawn."

As he spoke he turned round on his mule and looked back at the mighty rocks that descended in giant steps to the road that led to the Sahara.

"You understand?" he added, turning round again.

"Monsieur wishes to go up there, near the gorge?"

Sir Claude looked sharply at the Arab.

"Yes," he said, after a slight hesitation.

"I do not know if there will be Barbary sheep up there."

"I intend to find out, anyway."

"I am the servant of monsieur. I will do whatever monsieur desires. Monsieur will be generous to me?"

Sir Claude gnawed his mustache, looking down sideways at the road. His pride, and something else, revolted against the idea of making the guide his confidant. But there was something alive and burning within him, something passionate, even furious, which seemed to be fighting his own nature and to be subduing it.

"I shall be generous to you," he said at last, without looking at the Arab. "If you do exactly what I want—and don't talk."

Achmed put his finger to his lips.

"Monsieur has only to tell me," he said softly.

"I don't want those fellows to know where I'm going to-night," Sir Claude said. "I want the camp pitched a good way out, but so that I can get to the mountain at the left of the road on the edge of the desert; the mountain that rises out of the gorge, where all those rocks are."

"And when does monsieur wish to be on the mountain?"

"I wish to be there toward sunset. I shall take some food with me in case I'm back late. But the camp must be pitched a long way off."

"And I am to come with monsieur and guide him back?"

Sir Claude rode on for a minute or two without speaking. Then he answered:

"You can come with me and wait for me."

"Wait for monsieur?"

"I'll settle where. That'll do."

They rode on in silence. Achmed's brain was working busily and his heart was happy. He would get money, after all. But he was full of curiosity. What was the Roumi going to do? What did he know or suspect?

Sir Claude did not tell him. Indeed, he sent Achmed on ahead, and rode alone till they had reached a desolate plateau surrounded by bare mountains, whose rocky crests were sharply defined against the clear sky, in which the moon hung like a ghostly thing as yet scarcely visible against the blue. Then Achmed pulled up and called out to him.

"Monsieur will sleep here. This is a good place from which to go out after the sheep."

"All right," said Sir Claude.

He swung himself off his mule, and walked up and down while the men put up the tent and picketed the beasts. He felt desperately lonely; almost as he had long years ago when he went to a public school for the first time, and cold—cold through all his body. Only his head was burning and his temples were throbbing. As he walked he stared at the mountains that encircled him—monstrous, cruel-looking shapes. He was not imaginative, but to-day they impressed him powerfully, almost terribly, and he remembered—again going back to his boyhood—how once as a child he had been left alone in the drawing-room on a dark, wet day, and had turned over the leaves of a great red book which contained pictures of the circles of hell. In those pictures there were mountains like these, and hideous ravines guarded by rocks like gigantic teeth. And among the mountains and in the ravines the souls of the lost were imprisoned.

It seemed to him then that the little boy in the drawing-room had seen in the book prophetic pictures, and he shivered.

The Arabs began to sing as they worked. One of them wailed in a plaintive voice for two or three minutes. Then the others sang in chorus. Then the first voice wailed again alone.

Presently the tent was up, and Achmed came to him smiling and carrying the guns.

"I am ready, monsieur."

"And the food?"

"What will monsieur have?"

"Anything—bread and cheese and a bit of meat. But I'll have a drink before we start."

He went over to the tent and pulled the cork out of a bottle of brandy. Achmed gave him a glass. He half-filled it, poured in some soda-water, and drank it off, while Achmed got the provisions. Then he poured more brandy into a large silver flask, put it into his pocket, and mounted a mule. Achmed was going to walk. They set off together, and soon lost sight of the camp.

Achmed walked in front at first to show the way, but presently he dropped back, and kept by the side of the mule. He wanted to talk, to satisfy his curiosity. He was not shy. No desert Arab is. But when he glanced up at Sir Claude an uneasiness took possession of him. The Roumi looked different; like a changed man, changed even in feature.

It was Sir Claude who spoke first.

"You know what I want," he said roughly. "I want you to take me to the mountain above the gorge, to a place from which I can get down among the rocks; get down as low as I like; right down if I wish to."

"Monsieur, it is not easy."

"That don't matter. Have you ever done it?"

"Monsieur, I can go wherever a goat can go. But I go with naked feet."

"Where you can get down I can."

"I will show monsieur a place. If monsieur goes where I show him, monsieur could get down to near the rock where Benchaâlal sat when we passed by this morning."

"That's it."

"If Benchaâlal should be there to-night, he would be surprised to see monsieur."

There was a vicious sound in the Arab's soft voice.

"Why should Benchaâlal be there to-night?" said Sir Claude fiercely. "What do you mean?"

"Nothing, monsieur. Only — only Benchaâlal often goes into the desert by night. But monsieur is in bed—monsieur sleeps, and does not see him go."

A deep flush of red went over Sir Claude's brown face. He realized in that moment that this Arab knew much more, certainly, than he did. And yet he knew enough, surely! He knew that when he returned to the inn his wife's room was empty. He knew that she crept back to the inn with a white, terrified face when the sun was up. He knew that when she said she must have been asleep when the mules came in from the desert she lied to him. All this he knew. But now a terrible curiosity was awake in him with a terrible anger, a terrible sense of wrong, and a terrible contempt. He had felt it all day, this desire to know more, but he had resisted it. And he had meant to resist it always. He had meant to—but now!

"Achmed," he said, staring straight before him between the mules' ears at the stony track.

"Monsieur."

"Why should—why should Benchaâlal go into the desert at night alone? What does he go for? Has he friends in the village?"

"Monsieur, he has friends. But he does not go to the village."

Achmed was silent for a moment. Then he added slowly:

"And he does not go alone."

"Whom does he go with?" said Sir Claude, after a pause of hesitation, and in an uncertain voice.

"But surely monsieur knows!" Achmed said innocently. "If anybody should know with whom Benchaâlal walks at night, it would be monsieur."

"Answer my question, Achmed. It does not matter—what I know. You answer my question."

"Benchaâlal walks at night with madame."

"You're a damned liar!"

Achmed said nothing. But he withdrew a pace or two from the mule. He did not look angry. Being called a liar did not distress him at all. Every human being was a liar, he supposed. And why not? Still, he had told the truth this time. The Roumi was a fool not to believe him.

"D'you hear?" Sir Claude said fiercely.

"I hear, monsieur."

"I know all about you. Madame at the auberge told me."

"Madame at the salt mountain is a *chamelle*," Achmed answered viciously. "If monsieur believes such a woman, a woman whom every Arab——"

"That'll do. You needn't blackguard the woman."

"If monsieur doubts my words I will not speak at all. But I always tell the truth. No Arab speaks the truth as I do. All the rest are liars. I alone speak the truth. Let monsieur find out for himself. I say that madame walks with Benchaâlal at night. And why not? Who would not wish to see the moon upon the desert? Madame loves these things. Monsieur—no! Therefore monsieur sleeps, and madame finds some one to accompany her. She cannot go alone, and Benchaâlal is not a poor Arab. He is an officer. So madame chooses Benchaâlal. It is very simple."

The last words of the Arab struck hard into Sir Claude's heart, as truth sometimes strikes like a well-aimed knife.

"Therefore monsieur sleeps!" Yes, it was very simple. At that moment Sir Claude saw himself as the first and the last of fools. When a man

has such a vision of himself, if he is really a man, the momentary crumbling of all his self-respect is succeeded by a desire that seems made of granite—the desire to reinstate himself upon his seat, his throne of manhood. At whatever cost he must do that; at whatever cost of suffering; perhaps of crime.

"Where are we?"

Achmed stretched out his arm.

"Monsieur sees that rock there, to the south, shaped like a resting camel?"

"I see it."

"From that rock monsieur can see the villages of El-Akbara."

Sir Claude pulled up the mule.

"I'll get down here."

He swung himself to the ground before Achmed could speak.

"Take the mule."

"Monsieur is not going alone?"

"Yes. You're to stay here and wait for me. Give me some of the food."

"But if monsieur wishes to descend, I must come with him to show the way."

"I did not say I was going down. Give me the food."

He slung one of the guns over his shoulder.

"But I am responsible for monsieur. When it gets dark——"

"Achmed," Sir Claude said abruptly, "here's a hundred francs."

He drew out a note and put it into the guide's eager hand.

"If you attempt to follow me, you won't get another penny. If you stay here, as I tell you, you'll get more. Do you understand?"

"And if—if monsieur does not return?"

"Have you got a watch?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"If by midnight I haven't come back, you can do what you like. You can come after me, or you can go to the camp. The food!"

The guide handed it to him in silence.

"Au revoir!"

"Au revoir, m'sieu! *Bon voyage!*"

He stood holding the mule, and watched Sir Claude walk away with long strides toward the mountain that was dominated by the mighty rock.

Sir Claude walked on till the rocks hid him from Achmed's sight. Then he stopped for a moment and looked around him. The sun was already declining, and upon those mountains which were not within the circle of its final glories there was settling a strange grayness. Their naked flanks and treeless summits looked worn and weary, like a face lined with the travail of life. The lonely man drew a long breath as he looked at them. He was wondering—wondering at the thought of the joy that had come to him from these mountain fastnesses only a few hours before. Then he had reveled in their wildness; had been stirred by the thought of their remoteness from England. The blood in his veins had leaped in answer to the winds that blew over them, in answer to the sun that made their scattered crystals shine like jewels. An intense physical well-being had been generated within him by the African airs, the African desolation, by the freedom and the strangeness of this spacious, undressed country.

Now he felt a horror and a hatred of all that had rejoiced him. They had come to him with a horror and a hatred of the men whose native land this was.

Sir Claude that evening was like a man who has fallen into an abyss from a sunlit peak. His world, the world he had known and believed in, had suddenly vanished out of his sight. All familiar landmarks were gone; and the utterly incredulous man was turned into a man ready to be credulous of any abomination.

That the woman he had mentally set far above him should have done the unimaginable thing, should have allowed one of these brown men to—he ground his teeth together and went on toward that rock like a resting camel. He was confused. He walked in a nightmare.

Kitty's birth, bringing up, life, tastes—all seemed to give the lie to the truth. Was she mad? Was she immeasurably corrupt? How had he never suspected it? Her caprices had been like the caprices of a child. And what was she?

He did not formulate to himself what

she had possibly done. He did not mentally accuse her definitely of what everybody would acknowledge to be the last infamy. He stopped short of that because it seemed to him just then that what he was sure of was enough. For he was sure. Even without Achmed's words—and he believed them; he somehow knew that they were true—he was sure.

That morning, when he had reached the hotel, he had hurried up the stairs and gone at once to his wife's room. He had found it empty, and, as he stood there staring at the bed, he knew a horrible thing; knew that he had expected to find it empty; had known almost that it would be empty.

It is very strange that sometimes, if we are close to a person whom we cannot see, and of whose presence we are not otherwise aware, but with whom we are very intimate, we feel that person is near us. Something, we know not what, tells us so. We may believe that we reject the subtle information, but do we ever really reject it?

Few people would have picked out Sir Claude Wyverne as a sensitive man. Nevertheless, in connection with his wife, he could be very sensitive. That morning, as he sat on his mule face to face with the very composed African, who smiled at him half-sleepily, and sent the pale-blue smoke out through his dilated nostrils, Sir Claude had felt suddenly as if his wife were near him. It was then that he had looked behind the Spahi; had made a movement as if to get off his mule. The Spahi had read him in that moment; had known that it was terribly critical. But he had kept his head. He had met Sir Claude's movement with absolute immobility, Sir Claude's strained, searching glance with eyes that held only a calm serenity. And he had stopped Sir Claude from carrying out his intention as certainly as if he had seized and bound him to his mule by the exercise of superior strength.

The African's calm had made Sir Claude realize then the probable madness of his own supposition. He had felt for the moment ashamed of himself, and had ridden away. Nevertheless, directly he had gone, again had come to him the horrible feeling that Kitty had been near to him when he was near to Benchaâlal. In vain he combated this feeling. It remained with him all the way through the gorge, and until he drew up before the inn door. Then he went up-stairs and saw the empty room. And then it seemed to him that he knew—knew the incredible, the impossible.

Yet he did not go back to the Spahi. Kitty had thought that he could not be subtle; anything else, but not subtle. Yet even she did not know, did not divine all that there was in her husband, all that he might be, might do under unusual circumstances.

When he saw that empty bedroom a new man seemed suddenly to be born within Sir Claude; a man conceived in infinite travail. That new man was quiet, self-controlled. He stood for a moment very still. Then he turned and went to his bedroom and locked himself in. The green persiennes that were fastened over the French windows which opened onto the veranda prevented any one upon the veranda from looking into the bedroom, but permitted any person in the bedroom to see clearly into the world without. The windows were shut. Sir Claude opened them gently, and stood still behind the persiennes. There he remained, waiting, motionless, with his hands hanging by his sides and his eyes, bloodshot with fatigue, staring at the white road beyond the Judas-trees. And at last he saw coming along the white road a woman with a white face. He saw her look up at his windows; a glance of dreadful, searching anxiety. It seemed to him for a moment that he met her eyes, that they stared into his, that they knew he was there. Then she passed out of his sight, creeping across the pavement of the court. And then presently he heard behind him a soft and furtive step, like the step of a thief or a marauder; the creak of a door. She had come in, his wife. She was close to him. He heard her key turn in the lock.

And only then was he conscious that

drops of sweat were rolling down his face.

He went over to the washstand and bathed his face. His big hands were trembling. They wanted to do something. He knew what they wanted to do. At that moment they longed to kill the woman they had so often caressed.

He looked down at them with a sort of dull wonder.

The wonder had never quite left him since then.

Now he walked on again, slowly, mounting over the uneven ground toward the great rock from which he would be able to see the three villages of El-Akbara.

When he reached it the sun had gone down, but there was still some red in the western sky. He sat down upon the rock and looked over the desert. He meant to descend presently, but he must rest for a moment. He must think, or try to think.

He felt horribly tired both in body and in mind.

As he looked out upon the desert again the sense of utter loneliness, of immense desolation came over him. He fingered his gun mechanically as he sat there.

In the distance, among the great tufted palm-trees, he saw thin trails of smoke rising from the African houses, tiny birds—they were doves, but he did not know it—circling about a brown minaret, that from this height looked black; some camels creeping along the road toward the south. Beside the camels little, hooded men walked swiftly.

These hooded men were of the race of the Spahi; of the dark-blooded Oriental race.

A sort of sickness came upon Sir Claude. Kitty was bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, yet now there was a gulf between them. He was on this, the hither side of it. She was upon the farther side; the side where the dark races swarmed beneath the torrid African sun. Secretly, in the night, while he slept the sleep of the fool, she had crossed the gulf.

He believed he hated her. And he kept on fingering his gun.

Yes, he hated her; and he had a right to hate her. He said that to himself dully.

There was not a living Englishman who would not condemn her. She had put herself out of court.

Even now he did not say to himself that she had committed the worst offense. It was not necessary to say that. He knew enough without that. For now he was sure that when he had spoken to Benchaâlal by the river she had been there. She had been with the Arab; and when he, her husband, had come she had hidden from him.

That was enough. He wished he had killed her in her hiding-place.

The desert was growing darker. He got up from the rock and turned to go down to the gorge.

XII.

Benchaâlal sat cross-legged in a corner of the principal *café maure* of the brown village of El-Akbara. This café was situated on the highroad that led to the desert, and was opposite to the Arab cemetery—a quantity of upright stones fixed in the hard, sun-dried earth, without wall or fence to guard the homes of the dead from intruders. Outside the café was a sort of arbor made of reeds. In this squatted four or five Arabs playing dominoes. But within the café there was no one but the Spahi and the barelegged attendant who served the coffee, which he took from a niche of earth in which glowed a fire of brushwood. Now and then an Arab passed across the space of the doorway. One or two even looked in, and solemnly spoke a greeting to the Spahi. But he seemed to hear nothing, to see no one. With his eyes fixed upon the ground he sipped his coffee and smoked cigarette after cigarette, taking the tobacco from a long silver box which lay beside him, and rolling it swiftly and deftly in the thin slips of paper of which he always carried a large supply.

He was absorbed. His mind lay

deep down in reverie. All trace of the fury which had convulsed him when he was with Achmed had died out of his face. He looked quite calm, almost sleepy. But his mind was fiercely alive. His passions were ablaze. And all the time that he sat motionless he was meditating activity.

Benchaâlal was swiftly intelligent without being what English people sometimes call "deep." Where his own dear interests were involved he was acute and quite without scruple. And though, perhaps, he could not have been subtle for a long time, could not have been very patient in any cleverness, he knew how to be both ingenious and secretive at a moment, as he had proved many times in his life. But he had the fault which spoils so much Arab diplomacy. When his passions were strong he was often carried away by them. His temper often pulled down the edifice built up by his craft. And when calm returned to him he looked upon the ruins.

Already he had realized the mistake he had made with Achmed.

The guide would surely go and betray him to the Roumi; to the big blond hunter of Barbary sheep, who went to bed ere the moon was up, and who left his pretty creature, his little squirrel of the woods, his rose of the garden, his Fatma with the eyes like turquoises, and the tiny hands like silver, to hear the Spahi's serenade, and to sit beside the Spahi by the river. Benchaâlal had a great contempt for the Roumi—the contempt of the cultured Mussulman for the uncultured Ghristian, than which there are few feelings more unmeasured, few feelings more profound. But he must take the Roumi into account; must reckon with him now that the great mistake was made, and that the outburst of fury which had caused it was subsiding.

What would the Roumi do?

Benchaâlal had his own ideas about foreigners, gathered chiefly from his intercourse with the French in Algiers, and during two visits which he had made to Paris. Of the English he knew but little. He knew them to be a great nation. He conceived of them as all very rich. He imagined them all dwelling in a northern land, which was perpetually shrouded in heavy yellow clouds of great density called by them *"Le fogge."* The blood in such lands ran cold, he supposed. Without the sun, how could there be fire in men?

He knew very well what an Arab would do, or try to do, if he were told a story such as Achmed would surely tell the Roumi; had, perhaps, already told him. He would kill, or try to kill, the woman who had wronged his pride of possession, and the man who had persuaded her. But the English were not like the Arabs. They let their women run loose. They let them talk and laugh with any man who comes near. To an Arab the freedom of Western women is a perpetual source of amazement; and the situation of the Western man in regard to his women makes him an object of secret contempt among Orientals. This contempt, felt strongly by Benchaâlal, caused him to ponder now. Although he knew what he would do were he Sir Claude, he could not tell what Sir Claude would do.

He had looked into the Roumi's face on the river-bank. It had been stern, hard. The eyes were searching. It was a man's face. That was certain. Yet this man had slept each night, leaving his woman to do what she would. And he had deserted her each day. Perhaps he did not care what happened.

Nothing had happened yet.

His mind left Sir Claude and went to Lady Wyverne. And here the Spahi was on surer ground. He had an instinct with women. Western men he did not understand thoroughly, despite his intercourse with the French. But he would have laughed to hear any one tell him that he could be long tricked or puzzled by a woman; that a woman could play with him, or read him while keeping the pages of her book closed from his eyes. For a moment he put aside Sir Claude and his possible actions, and concentrated himself upon the little squirrel of the woods, the rose of the garden.

Granted that Sir Claude did not interfere at once, granted that Lady Wyverne was not carried off to Beni-Mora, what would she do? What would she do now if left to herself?

Very deep grew Benchaâlal's reverie. For a while he even forgot to sip his coffee and roll a new cigarette. His eyes were fixed on the floor. His hands dropped down to his feet, and held them loosely.

Presently across the sunlit space of the doorway passed a strange figure clad in bright green, with a green-and-red turban. It was the mad Marabout wandering to and fro, absorbed, led by some hallucination, perhaps. Two, three times he passed and repassed before the door of the café unobserved by Benchaâlal. Then he came in under the arbor of reeds and stood still, peering into the shadowy room with his large, blue eyes, which were like the eyes of a distracted Christ. Benchaâlal did not look up. The Marabout stared at him, hesitated, moved a little away, then seemed to take courage, stepped furtively into the café, came toward Benchaâlal, and finally squatted down near him on the floor.

The attendant stared in grave surprise, for the madman never went beneath a roof, but seemed to have a passion for the sky and the air, and for years had always slept under the stars. After regarding the Marabout for a moment, he made a guttural sound in his throat, and pointed toward the brass coffee-pot. The Marabout paid no attention. He was looking alternately at Benchaâlal and at the floor, with a flickering curiosity and uneasiness that were almost wholly animal. At length the Spahi glanced up and noticed his companion.

"Bring me another coffee, Ahmeda," he said to the attendant.

When it was brought he held it out to the Marabout, who accepted it furtively and began to sip, looking away with his head held on one side, like one performing an unusual action that he fears may be condemned if seen.

The Spahi began to roll a cigarette. When it was finished he put it into the Marabout's hand. Then he rolled one for himself, and again seemed to sink into a reverie.

The Marabout smoked slowly and carefully, gazing at the smoke, as it curled away from his lips and evaporated, with an air of childish wonder. And presently Benchaâlal began to watch him. He remembered when this man had been sane, when he had been respected for his wealth. A visit to Beni-Mora had been his ruin. In the dusty, dancing street, with its wailing music, its gleaming lights, its small, white houses, he had met his fate in the girl from the south, Ayesha.

What a strange thing to go mad for a woman, to come to this! To sit with the Marabout was almost like sitting with an animal. Benchaâlal's mind ran on women and the havoc they cause; and he wondered whether he would ever be rewarded for the love of them as this man had been. For a moment the companionship of this poor creature almost moved him to a strange decision. What if he were to mount a horse, set his spurs to its flanks, and go out into the desert, go on and on with never a look behind, never a thought flung back to the Roumi woman in the gorge. Like to like! He belonged to the desert and the desert to him. It was as the old woman of the auberge had said. The Arab changes not. Bring him back to the sand, and the veneer of Western civilization drops from him. He casts it away. He forgets it. He drinks the fierce red soup. He puts his dark fingers to the cous-cous. He smokes the keef. And it is gone, the pretense and the dream of other lands. It is shriveled by the sun, his sun, the sun that shines upon the great bare world of Allah and his Prophet.

The Marabout stirred, whimpered. His cigarette was smoked out. He got up, balanced himself first on one bare foot, then on the other, cast a shifty, sidelong glance at Benchaâlal, and crept out of the café. The Spahi saw him walk straight forward in the sun until he reached the cemetery beyond the highroad. There he began to wander round and round among the stones that

marked the graves, circling almost as a hungry pariah dog sometimes does when it seeks by night for carrion.

Benchaâlal wondered why he had come into the café. What had drawn him? He had surely shown a sort of sympathy, a sort of desire for companionship. Had his possessing thought of a woman gone out to Benchaâlal's thought of a woman? When he met Lady Wyverne in the gorge that night he had come up to her, he had stopped beside her, he had gazed upon her, almost as if he fancied she was his Ayesha.

Pif! The poor wretch was mad! Useless to think about him! Nevertheless, the Spahi's eyes followed his green robe as he circled—circled among the tombs in the glaring afternoon sun.

It was nearly sunset when Benchaâlal rose up, paid for his coffee, and went out onto the white road.

He did not know yet that the Roumi had gone hunting again in the mountains. Achmed had not told him. But now, on the road, he met the sleepy boy from the inn, and he learned the news.

"They will be out all night, Benchaâlal Hamdan ben Mohammed," said the boy. "The Roumi has taken a tent to sleep in. They have gone toward the Tell, to the mountain of the dwellers in the rocks."

Benchaâlal listened in silence, looking very grave. This news surprised him, but he did not show any surprise.

"Is Achmed with the stranger, the Englishman?" he said at length.

"Achmed is with him."

Benchaâlal said nothing more, but walked down the road slowly toward the gate of the Sahara.

So the Englishman had gone away again and had left his woman to do as she willed! Benchaâlal's astonishment deepened as he realized it. He thought about it carefully as he walked, and turned it over many times in his mind. Crafty as he was, he dismissed the idea that this departure was a trap. He could not help having an Arab's point of view, and it would have been absolutely impossible for an Arab who knew the truth to ride off into the mountains leaving his woman alone, even if he meant to come back and surprise her. He must have stayed. He must have acted quickly. His jealousy must have fulfilled its lust promptly, decisively, furiously.

Benchaâlal decided in his mind that the Roumi did not know anything yet. Despite his return in the night he did not know. But surely Achmed would tell him!

The Spahi was now entering the gorge, and was close to the rock where Sir Claude had seen him when they spoke together. Near it, with his flute to his lips, sat the eternal piper playing the eternal tune. Benchaâlal glanced at him, then backward toward the desert. Not far off he saw the Marabout coming furtively along the road, following him. He stopped. The Marabout stopped, too, and looked uneasy, but did not retreat. Benchaâlal began really to wonder why the poor creature was intent upon him. Some strange idea must have dawned in his mind. Usually he loved solitude. He attached himself to no one. Many had striven to persuade him to enter their houses, had endeavored to win some recognition, some affection from him, but always in vain. He accepted the food they put into his hand, but that was all. Directly he had it he fled, to eat it alone in some hidden corner of the rocks, or some recess of the palm-gardens. Had he conceived a crazy liking for the Spahi?

Benchaâlal waved his hand, called out to him. But the Marabout only tore at his fair beard, held his head on one side, and looked away. At last Benchaâlal desisted, and walked on once more. The Marabout followed him to the entrance of the gorge, and there again stood, still staring after him. When the Spahi disappeared he whimpered like an animal. Something seemed to be disturbing, even distressing, him. He hesitated for some minutes, shifting from one naked foot to the other. Then at last, very furtively, like a creature seeking its lair, he left the road and vanished among the rocks beneath the mountain, from which, just

then, Sir Claude was looking down upon the desert and the villages among the pines.

XIII.

Benchaâlal had already forgotten him.

As the Spahi approached the inn his mind had gone to the woman within it, and the fires smoldering within him began to blaze up once more.

Lady Wyverne and he had parted strangely by the river. He had been almost brutally commanding to her, recognizing the necessity of recalling her to herself after the almost hysterical terror which had taken possession of her. And she had not resented his tone of authority at the time, but had obeyed him with a sort of quick meekness. She had washed her face in the river, had controlled her tears, and left him quietly, despite her dread of what might have happened in the inn.

But all that was many hours ago. Benchaâlal knew well that her mood would probably have altered by now. The terror that had assailed her would have vanished with the departure of her husband on this fresh sporting expedition. And with the departure of terror there would be room in her mind and heart for other emotions.

These emotions might well be inimical to him.

At that thought a fierceness leaped up in the Spahi's heart, a fighting energy that was reckless. He forgot Sir Claude finally, dismissed him to the mountains and the Barbary sheep, to the hunting that was surely the only thing he cared for.

Another hunting engrossed the Spahi, the sport that was the passion of his life, the consuming passion, as it is of the lives of so many Arabs, taking precedence of all things, even of the pursuit of money. There was a woman to be conquered. She had nearly been conquered. So he told himself. Was she to escape now because of one contretemps brought about by the lack of ingenuity of the fool Achmed? His hot blood boiled at the thought.

As he came to the Judas-trees he did not see Lady Wyverne upon the veranda. The persiennes and the window of her room were open. He fancied he discerned a shadowy figure beyond them, and believed her to be there, perhaps watching for his return. He wondered whether she wished to meet or to avoid him. With difficulty he summoned patience to him. He knew it was quite useless to try to speak with her for some hours, and he went to his room and shut himself in till the bell rang for dinner. Then he came down majestically, in his wide linen trousers, his red jacket, his red gaiters, newly perfumed, his long eyes shining beneath his turban.

When he entered the dining-room it was occupied only by a young French couple, a painter and his wife, who had arrived that afternoon, and who stared at him with an interest which he did not return, although he bowed to them in the French manner as he came in, and sat down at his little table, placing himself so that he would be sitting sideways to Lady Wyverne if she came.

But perhaps she would not come.

He had hardly formed the words with his mind before he heard a gentle rustling upon the staircase, and she entered, carrying a book in her hand. Each evening hitherto she had worn a high white dress and a little black hat at dinner. To-night she wore the same hat with a black dress, that was evidently a day dress. As the Spahi very slightly bowed to her, as to a stranger, he wondered whether this change was caused by any motive, or emotion, discoverable by him. Now and then he glanced at her while she ate, trying to read her face. He thought it looked colder, harder than usual, even a little older. But that might be a fancy caused by his knowledge of what had happened to her that day. She did not stay till the end of dinner. After the first course of meat she got up quietly and went out. He heard her dress rustling as she ascended the stairs.

He lingered a long while at his table, taking his coffee there instead of outside under the veranda. The French painter

and his wife disappeared, and he was left alone. He wondered what Lady Wyverne was doing, whether she had shut herself up in her room, had gone to bed; whether she would be out on the veranda. Surely she would give him a chance of speaking with her. If not, he meant to make one for himself. He waited till the household and the servants were safely at supper. Then he strolled out to the little court, and went to the place where he had stood on the evening of the Wyvernes' arrival, by the fence under the Judas-trees. He did not look up immediately, but took out the silver box and carefully rolled a cigarette. When he had put it between his lips and lit it, he glanced at the veranda.

She was not there, but he saw the gleam of light in her room, the window of which was open. And presently he saw her figure, like a black shadow, passing to and fro in the lit space. What was she doing? Packing, perhaps, or getting ready to come out. He waited quietly. Presently he saw her figure no more. But the light still burned. He had finished his cigarette. He threw the end of it away. Then he opened his mouth and began to sing, or whine, the curious Eastern song with which he had serenaded Lady Wyverne before he had ever spoken to her. It was a song about a Caïd who loved a dancer, and who gave her many presents, gold and silver bracelets, amulets and veils, a hedgehog's foot and a powder of hashish. Whenever she danced he was there to watch her, and at last he played upon the *derbouka* before all the city, and she danced to his tune. And when he had finished he gave her the *derbouka* to hang upon the wall of her little room as a token of her power.

It was a song of many verses, but at last it was ended.

The Spahi looked at the light, smoked another cigarette. Still she did not come.

Then he sang the *chanson des vacances* of the children of the Zibans; and then he sang the song of the Great Mozabite whose love demanded as a marriage-gift the head of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet. The Mozabite murdered Ali in the mosque with a saber, and since that time the Mozabites are hated by all the other Arabs. When he got to the last verse, the hatred verse, Benchaâlal raised his voice, lifting his head up.

In the silence that followed he heard the noise of the river rushing through the gorge. His blood was on fire, and there was a noise in his brain—or so he fancied—that seemed to be caused by the surging of this blood on fire through his veins and arteries. The motionless trees angered him. The white road, still and empty, angered him. The black rocks that frowned above the inn infuriated him as he stared up at them. Everything seemed still to watch his impotence, to observe the failure of his desires.

But as yet he could do nothing. He must wait until the landlord and his wife had gone to bed. Another hour and, if she had not come to him, he would go to her. He moved away from the fence and went out onto the white road. There he strolled softly up and down, up and down. Above him the deep-purple sky began to grow bright with silver.

Surely she would come with the moon!

In her bedroom Lady Wyverne was sitting in a hard armchair which she had pulled away from the window. She had been putting some things into a trunk. She was devoured by a nervous restlessness which made it almost impossible for her to keep still, and the act of packing seemed to back up a resolution which she thought she had made, the resolution to see Benchaâlal no more. She said to herself that her husband might leave her alone or stay with her, might sleep or wake, be careless or watchful. It did not concern her any longer. She had done with her whim, for she had told herself it was a whim. The terror she had felt when she crouched down, hiding in the Spahi's cloak, had struck from her mind the caprice which had always dominated her. For she had only had a caprice for Benchaâlal. That she said to her-

self again and again. She would never risk her dignity more. It was over, this "bit of fun" in the desert, and, thank God, it had led to no evil consequences. For Crumpet could not know anything. His unexpected return must have been due really to the discomfort of the inn at the salt mountain. It must have been her own feeling of guilt which had made her imagine a strangeness in his manner, a certain coldness and reserve unusual in him. At the worst his suspicions must have been quite vague. It occurred to her that Achmed might have spoken, or, if he had not, might yet speak, tell what he knew. But why should he? She divined that he was in Benchaâlal's pay, though the Spahi had not told her so. She knew Achmed had been to the villages that day. No doubt he had seen Benchaâlal. No doubt Benchaâlal had made things "all right." She put away her fears, told herself that she had had a lucky escape, and resolved henceforward to have nothing to do with any strangeness that caught at her curiosity in Africa.

She sat down in the hard armchair and took up a book. It was a French novel. As she looked at its first pages she seemed to hear the tap of high-heeled boots upon the *trottoirs* of Paris. Well, she adored Paris! It would be delicious to see it again, delicious to go to the shops, and——

Benchaâlal began to sing the whining song of the Caïd who loved the dancer and who played for her upon the *derbouka*.

Lady Wyverne's novel dropped down into her lap. She sat quite still, listening.

It was ugly; yes, it was quite ugly. That whining voice would have no success if it sang in her world. That tune would be considered "too shockingly hideous." And yet it won upon her, it fascinated her, it made her regret that she was not free, free as a man is to follow his caprice, to investigate any mystery that appeals to him, to set his feet in any path that seems to lead to a land of promise.

It must be glorious to be perfectly free! Africa and its people had roused in Lady Wyverne a spirit of adventure which often lies dormant in people who are highly capricious, and this spirit of adventure extended its arms to the Spahi, as to a magician who could give it what it longed for.

Benchaâlal's voice died away, ending in the air.

Lady Wyverne took up her book again. But all the fascination of Paris had evaporated from its pages, which now seemed arid and hard as the pavements which echoed with high heels. She thought of naked brown feet treading softly in African slippers.

Again Benchaâlal sang.

She knew quite well why he was singing. It was his summons to her to come out to him. And she was not going to obey. She was soon going to shut the persiennes, undress, put out the light, get into bed. She looked at the bed. It was intended to be slept in. And she would not sleep. How utterly impossible it would be to sleep!

The *chanson des vacances* did not sound very gay to her ears. She did not know what it meant, but fancied it a song of the sadness of the desert. As she listened to it she thought of the morrow. Certainly they would go away on the morrow. Once more she would be isolated with Crumpet. Her intercourse with the Spahi had opened her eyes thoroughly to the nullity of Crumpet—except when he was angry. She felt certain that if he were really roused to anger, her husband could be impressive, even terrible. But otherwise—— There was something tragic in possessing a husband who could only be interesting when he was furious.

Benchaâlal was always interesting, and she had never seen him furious. Now he sang the song of the Mozabite who murdered the Prophet's son-in-law in the mosque. The hatred verse sounded quite loudly in her ears. Then there was silence. She listened. She expected another song. But the silence prolonged itself, and presently she felt sure that the Spahi had understood that his summons was in vain.

Had he gone away?

She longed to know, but she did not move from her chair, and presently she took up her novel again. But the restlessness in her increased, and she found it almost impossible to remain still. Reading about Paris had made her mind go back to the day when she had visited the astrologer with her husband. She recalled his written words. He had foreseen that her husband would be in danger of losing her—for so she interpreted the *"grande perte."* He would be in danger of losing her, but had he ever really possessed her? Had any one? And she, could she ever give herself utterly, with complete abnegation, to any one? She did not know. But she knew that the Spahi had had more empire over her than any other man had ever gained. She thought of this empire as at an end deliberately. He had begun to dominate her. But for this fright, which had awakened her sharply to a sense of the true value of events, he might have increased his dominion. Something of the spirit of the slave had certainly entered into her while with this man, who perhaps had wives who were little more than slaves. It was odd that as she now sat thinking of this subjection of her will and spirit to his she did not feel angry or even greatly humbled. Rather, she was conscious of missing a pleasure which she desired to enjoy once more.

She sighed, and again looked at the high bed. It was certainly impossible that she could sleep. She wondered where Sir Claude was; probably stretched on a camp-bed under the shadow of his tent, snoring. Mountains surrounded him, she supposed. And at dawn he would be out with his gun.

And if Achmed had told him!

But Achmed's lips were closed by the Spahi's money. She felt sure of that. She knew that she ought also to feel indignant about it. Perhaps, in another land, she would have felt indignant. But such enterprises seemed—not unnatural certainly, not even very culpable, here.

By the river, as she crouched beneath Benchaâlal's cloak, she had felt humiliated. But this sensation of shame had mysteriously left her with the terror that had been its companion.

And yet she certainly did not love this man. She did not love him, yet she felt a strong inclination to follow him and to obey him. It was as if he held in his hand a thin cord to which she was attached, and whenever he pulled, however gently, at this cord, she felt that she must move in the direction he desired.

Even now he was pulling at the cord, somewhere outside in the night. She was conscious of the subtle tug-tug.

If only he were not there, and she could go out upon the veranda and see the night and breathe the air from the desert! She felt imprisoned in this little room. It seemed to her that the atmosphere within it was suffocating.

She had packed her things in readiness for the morrow's departure, and was wearing a traveling-dress, as the Spahi had noticed. It felt insufferably tight and thick, and now, unable to be still, she got up, went to her trunk, and took out a dress of a thinner material and dark red in color. She had not worn it in El-Akbara. Quickly she exchanged the traveling-dress for it. Then she looked in the glass. She was surprised by the excited expression on her face. Her shining eyes were full of anticipation. This red gown looked unfinished without any jewels. She had a small jewel-case in her dressing-case. She opened it, took out a long diamond chain, and hung it round her neck.

She had heard that the Arabs delight in jewels and in all sparkling things, that their women are covered with gold coins and precious amulets. A great wish came to her that the Spahi could see her once, for a moment, in this red gown and with these diamonds. It was the desire of a coquette. After to-morrow they would probably never meet again. No doubt he would quickly forget all about her. She felt as if she would like to leave a last impression that would efface his remembrance of her, sobbing, tear-stained, and—obedient.

She sighed, standing still and hold-

ing the diamond chain lightly with her two hands.

Then she did what she had resolved not to do. She stepped out onto the veranda.

It was already late, according to the idea of the Frenchman who kept the inn. He and his wife and the servants had gone to bed. Deep silence reigned over this cloistered world on the edge of the world of freedom, silence broken only by the voice of the river. And that voice, enclosed in this exquisite casket of silence, seemed influenced by it, seemed to be refined, softened to a tenderness that was pathetic, that was almost yearning. The moon was coming up, thrusting its golden rim above the ebony silhouette of a great rock.

Lady Wyverne watched it almost breathlessly, as it rose with a mysterious steadiness, till its full circle was released from the fierce and dramatic shadow and was at liberty in the serene and starry sky.

That prisoner at least was free.

She looked across the court at the dark trees and at the road beyond. No one was upon it. She looked away to the dim shapes of the mountains. Her husband was somewhere among them. With the coming of the deep night a slight uneasiness that had been lurking in the under part of her mind had disappeared. Sir Claude was certainly away irrevocably.

And Benchaâlal?

A shadowy figure stole down the road, going toward the desert. It passed before she had had time to look at it closely, and disappeared into the moonlight. That it was an Arab she had seen. But that was all. The figure had seemed to be running. It fled as quickly, as silently as a shadow over a white sheet.

Lady Wyverne was startled and held her breath for a moment. She even turned half-round to the lighted room behind her, moved by a sudden feeling that there was danger in this solitude, that she had better go in from the veranda, close the persiennes, and forget the strange magic without. But as she turned she again heard the Spahi singing, only just heard him. The voice was almost a murmur, and she could not tell where it came from. But she knew that he was waiting, that he had seen her, that he was calling her.

Once again, as so many times in her life, the hands—the light but wilfully obstinate hands of caprice—took hold of her. And she was so afraid of resisting them—knowing that to-night there was alive within her a something that was cautious, that was even afraid—that she yielded abruptly to their guidance. Without pausing to catch up a cloak, she went softly out of her room, down the dark staircase, and out into the courtyard.

XIV.

Benchaâlal, who was beneath the veranda, smiled when he saw Lady Wyverne come into the court and look swiftly round her. For a moment he did not move, but watched the little, slight figure in its red dress, the sparkle of the thin chain of diamonds in the moonlight. How dainty and elfin she looked, how different from the terrified woman by the river! She crossed the court, going toward the Judas-trees. He came out and joined her.

When she saw him she said in a low voice:

"Did you see that man go past?"

"Madame?"

"Just now, a man—running! He went that way."

She pointed toward the mouth of the gorge.

"I saw no one, madame. But I was not thinking of men on the road. Was it an Arab?"

"Yes."

"Let us follow him."

"No. I have come down to say good-by. We go to-morrow. I have been very silly here, and I am very glad to go."

She stood looking at him. Again her hands had gone up to the chain of diamonds and held it lightly.

Benchaâlal loved jewels, and all things that glittered and shone. His

Oriental imagination was stirred by them. They roused his senses, too, as perfume did, and music and bright colors. Their fierceness called to the fierceness in him. It was not very wise of Lady Wyverne to have put them on that night. She saw his eyes go to them and stay with them for an instant, then look at her with a glance that was bright like steel.

"Let us walk through the gorge for the last time," he said.

She shook her head.

"After this morning—no! I had a fright, a lesson!"

She spoke in her most airy, most petulantly childish way, trying to abolish from his mind the memory of her hysterical collapse.

"A lesson from your husband?"

"Well—yes."

"And he is giving you another lesson to-night, madame. Will you never learn the meaning of Barbary sheep?"

As he finished he glanced nervously at the hotel, as if he suspected that they were being watched, overheard. In reply to his glance she said:

"Well, just beyond the trees, then!"

He held open the gate for her. They passed out and went a few steps down the road.

"You don't understand Englishmen," she said.

"*Mon Dieu!* How can I?" He shrugged his shoulders and lifted his slim hands. "We get our blood warmed each day by the sun, madame, we Arabs. How can we understand?"

His eyes were again on her jewels. They spoke to him in the moonbeams. Each diamond, when it glittered, had a voice.

"You think——"

She hesitated. She knew what he was thinking, that her husband cared nothing for her, that his soul was wrapped up in the love of sport. It seemed as if it were so. But she knew that it was not. She knew, and yet so subtle was this man's influence upon her that now he sent to her his doubt—if it were doubt and not pretense of doubt.

He moved on a few steps very quietly, and she went with him, as if unconsciously.

"Madame, I think that what woman chooses not to see she does not see, that what woman chooses not to realize she does not realize. Am I wrong? I am only an Arab. I cannot know. I can only hazard. I can only guess."

Humility from a man with eyes like his, eyes sparkling with intelligence, keen and searching, almost cunning, came absurdly.

"Only an Arab!" exclaimed Lady Wyverne.

She could not think of these dark men as her husband did. To her they seemed subtle as women, imbued with a strange femininity despite their ruthlessness, their fierceness.

"You—doubtless you think we are barbarians?"

She looked up at him. At that moment she knew that it was the barbarian in him which attracted her, or, at least, the barbarous strain in him which was combined with something else.

"You are afraid of us, perhaps?" he added. "You think we are capable of everything?" He used the French expression, *capable de tout.* "Is it not so?"

"I—I think you might be."

They were still walking onward toward the gate of the desert. The voice of the river was in their ears, the silver of the moonbeams was about them. Benchaâlal's eyes went continually to the flashing fires of the diamonds that hung down to his companion's waist.

"And is it not better so? What is a man if he is not capable of all when he feels all, when he desires all? Would you have his manners tame, his words slow, his face calm, when his heart is on fire, when his nature is calling, when his blood is crying out, crying out like the river there as it rushes toward the desert? It wants its freedom, and the man wants his; wants the liberty to be as he really is, to act no more, but to hate and to love as his blood tells him. The Englishman! He does not want all this. What does he want? Barbary sheep, *mon Dieu!* Barbary sheep!" He laughed low, as if to himself. "Well,

then, in the name of Allah and of his Prophet, let the Englishman have his Barbary sheep, but let the Arab have" —he stopped, then he added slowly— "his desire, the desire of his life."

Lady Wyverne felt as if his words were gusts of heat from a furnace coming to her fiercely. She knew that she did not really care for the Spahi, yet whenever she was with him he forced her, as it were, into his atmosphere. Some men have this power. They spread a magic carpet. They carry you away, out of your window, over the tree-tops, over the seas, far off to the strange lands, where the voices are strange and the flowers strange, and you lose your identity and become as the strange people are.

Again Lady Wyverne smelled the perfume that emanated from his garments. She stopped.

"Where are we going?" she said. "I told you I would not walk with you to-night."

"Madame, it is the last time. To-morrow you go, and I—I go on my three days' journey into the desert. You will never come there. You will take the train to-morrow. You will go back to England. It is good-by."

"Yes, it is good-by."

Again she felt tempted. A longing to taste, just to taste, the mysterious African life assailed her, and her own existence presented itself to her as ineffably commonplace, insufferably empty. It was safe; yes, protected, but it was frightfully tame. Again she was the child tempted by the Celestial's pigtail.

"I know; but——"

"You must at least say good-by to the desert, madame."

"But—what do you mean? We are not going to England to-morrow. We are going on to Beni-Mora to-morrow."

Benchaâlal said nothing. He looked at her in silence, but in his eyes there seemed to be a sort of ironical pity and surprise.

"Why—why do you look at me like that?" she said.

"But—madame does not know?"

"Know what?"

"That monsieur turns his back on the desert?"

"I know nothing. I don't understand."

"Then I had better be silent. Madame will know to-morrow."

"Tell me now. Tell me at once."

"To-day—did you not notice anything strange in monsieur's manner to-day?" said Benchaâlal, drawing a bow at a venture very craftily.

"Yes, I—what did it mean?"

"That monsieur is tired of Africa, that to-morrow he turns his back to the desert. In Beni-Mora there are no Barbary sheep. Therefore, monsieur will not go to Beni-Mora."

"How do you know this?"

"But all at the hotel know it, the patron, the Arabs, every one. Perhaps not madame! The wise man acts quickly, without speech, when he acts against his wife's desire. Madame will know. To-morrow she will know, when she steps into the train that goes to Tunis!"

"Then—then I shall never see the real desert."

A bitter sense of disappointment, almost of outrage, swept over Lady Wyverne. All the wilfulness, which had ruled so long, seemed to start up, like a wild creature at the touch of a whip. She believed what Benchaâlal said. He spoke with an air of almost surprised sincerity that convinced her at once that he was speaking the truth. She grew hot with anger. This was why her husband's manner had been strange, furtive with her in the morning upon the veranda. This was why he had tried to avoid her kiss. He had had his sport, his pleasure, and now he was going to take her away. She was to yield to his convenience, to forego her desire.

Patches of red came out on her delicate cheeks and her eyes shone. Without saying another word, she walked on again.

And as she walked she thought that her desire of the desert had increased. Now that she was not to know the desert, it seemed to her that it was the one thing which she longed to know.

Benchaâlal kept close beside her as the gorge narrowed. He read her feelings, marked his success. But he was too clever to dwell upon Sir Claude. Instead, he turned to another subject. He spoke of the desert, of the strange life there, of the freedom, the adventure, the passion. And he spoke sincerely, for he loved his home, although, like many Arabs, he loved also the vices of cities now that he had begun to know them. He strove to kindle a blaze in the imagination of the woman beside him, a blaze that would rival the blaze of those diamonds which hung at her neck, moving as she moved, sparkling in the moonlight. They had given a mysterious impetus to his desire which no one not an Oriental could have comprehended. He connected them with their wearer, their brilliance with the brilliance of her angry eyes, their fairness with the fairness of her face, their glitter with the glitter of her hair. In his mind he compared her to a jewel, to a chain of jewels. And as he longed for them he longed for her. He desired to take them into his hands and to take her into his heart. And he spoke like one of the Goblin men of Goblin market. And she listened as to the voice of a Goblin man.

"Ah!" he exclaimed at last. "If you were not going to-morrow! Going back to England!"

"Perhaps I shall not go," she said.

There was almost a fierce ring in her clear voice that was no longer petulant.

"But if your husband is going?"

"Perhaps I shall not go," she repeated. "We women are not like women who are veiled. Western women are not slaves."

"But he will do what he chooses. I saw it in his eyes when I spoke with him by the river."

"He is not my master."

"I should be your slave."

They were near the mouth of the gorge now, and were walking at the base of that mountain on whose summit was the rock shaped like a lying camel.

"You must not speak to me like that," Lady Wyverne said.

"I should be your slave," he repeated, as if he had not heard her.

"But," she answered, with a faint-hearted attempt to restore a light tone to their conversation—"but in this land it is the women who are like slaves."

"The dark-skinned women! But you —you are fair. You are like a diamond, one of those diamonds you wear."

His hand went out toward the swinging chain instinctively, but he drew it back, making a strong effort to control himself.

"The dark men worship the fair women. You are like the silver moon. You are like the sun when it shines upon the great prayer after the fast of Ram-a-dan. When I see you I am looking at the east. Do you not know it?"

All the time he spoke he was watching her craftily. And yet he was fiercely moved, and by a double desire of possession. Two hearts seemed beating in his breast, the heart of a robber and the heart of a lover. The two controlling passions of the Arab were simultaneously alive within him. At that moment he was capable of falling at Lady Wyverne's feet and giving up his life to her, if she would yield to him. But he was also capable of murdering her for the chain of jewels at her neck if she resisted him. And this is only to say that he was Arab.

Yet though Benchaâlal was on fire at this moment and knew not what he was going to do, what deed of passion or of terror, he never ceased to be watchful of his companion. His cunning waited for the moment when her face should give him a sign that he might dare all.

She had seen his dusky hand go out toward the diamonds, and for an instant had felt a thrill of something that was like repugnance or even fear. But it vanished. For she told herself that the gesture was an absolutely natural one, according with the comparison he made. Nevertheless, there had been something in the look of his hand, as it darted out from the folds of his garments, which had startled her and

left her more highly strung than she had been before. He knew that, and his following speech had been deliberately languid, like the speech of a poet of the tents.

"Do you not know it?" he repeated, going a little closer to her, so that his swinging cloak touched her gently as he walked.

"I turn to the east when I pray at dawn, but I turn to you when I pray at night. And you, will you hear my prayer?"

"Hush!" she said.

She spoke quietly, scarcely with reprobation. As she was going to see a last vision of the desert, there was no reason, surely, why she should not listen for the last time to the voice of the desert. And in this desert man she personified the desert for the moment. To-morrow the vision would have faded from her eyes and the voice would have died away forever from her ears. Once more she would have resumed her life with Crumpet. Her sense of resentment against her husband, too, restrained her resentment from falling on another.

In answer to her pretense of rebuke, he was suddenly silent. They walked on very slowly. She heard the tap of her high-heeled shoes on the hard road, and thought of the tap of the shoes on the *trottoirs* of Paris. Then she thought of the look of the Spahi's naked feet, that had seemed to clasp the river stones like hands, and of how she had dreamed of those feet padding softly over the desert sands, with a woman's feet beside them.

Well, now, a woman's feet were treading beside them, and toward the desert.

For a moment she gave herself up to an imagination. She conceived the impossible accomplished. Suppose she had allowed her caprice to develop; suppose she were a headstrong, unbalanced, passionate, reckless woman, instead of merely a whimsical, pleasure-loving, wilful little creature! Suppose she had been carried away, had gone mad over the Spahi! Suppose that they were really afoot for the great journey, that the past was left behind forever, hidden like a dropped burden among the rocks of the gorge, that the desert was opening out before them and that she had cast in her lot with the dark people of the waste places of the earth! How extraordinary that would be! For the moment her feather-headed caprice delighted in this imagination, played with it like a child with a colored ball that floats upward on the wind. She forced herself to live in this dream. Yes, it was so. Her old life was gone forever. She had done the strangest thing that ever woman had done. How they would talk of her in her old haunts, in the boudoirs of Paris and of London, on the race-courses of Newmarket and of Ascot, on the moors of Scotland under the misty mountains! What would they say of her? Did it matter? They were nothing to her any more, these friends and acquaintances of the past. Their talk would never again be her talk, nor their fads and their crazes hers. From the tyrannies of fashion she was forever freed, from the changing modes of the hour and of life. To the immutable East she was setting her face, to the land that does not change!

For the moment she was so much under the influence of her own deliberate imagination that she almost was the woman she thought of, and he, the Spahi, almost became to her that woman's master. Or slave? Which was it? Which would it be?

Which would it be?

As she asked herself this question she glanced at Benchaâlal with an expression in her eyes which had never been in them before when they had looked at him, an expression of deep inquiry, so feminine and yet so searching that it startled him, and added to her personality a charm that had been lacking to it before, the fascination of mystery. They were close to the opening in the gorge. The desert lay before them. Already in the distance they could see it. Their feet were almost touching the fringes of its vastness, and its magnetic wind came sighing to their cheeks.

To Benchaâlal at this moment it seemed as if events rose to a climax almost dramatically arranged by fate. The three visions—of the diamonds, of his companion's searching eyes, and of the moon-washed desert to which he belonged—gave themselves to his gaze almost as one. They were blended together, fused into a whole. And that whole—he must have it. It must be his, now. He could wait for it no longer. The jewels, the woman, and the desert—they must belong to him, now.

His dark hand shot out again and closed on Lady Wyverne's hand. He did not speak, but the grasp of his hand frightened her. It told her unmistakably that she was in danger. It was arbitrary. It was the hand of a robber as well as of a lover, a hand that could tear to pieces as easily, and, perhaps, almost as happily, as it could caress.

The desert came upon Lady Wyverne and the desert man came upon her, showing himself exactly as he was.

When his hand seized her hand she instinctively recoiled. Instantly his other hand shot out, and seized, not her other hand, but the diamond chain at her neck.

The whole man was nakedly revealed in those two quickly following actions.

As the Spahi's thin fingers closed upon the diamonds Lady Wyverne knew the depth of her folly, and there came to her a sickening horror in which the desert was condemned with the man. Tradition rushed back to the place in her nature from which her caprice had ousted it. Her heart clamored for the blessed protection of the commonplace which she had been rejecting, and the peculiar disgust which so many white-skinned people feel toward the dark races of the earth suddenly rose up in her, rose to the level of her husband's.

All this vehement recoil of her nature the Spahi felt as it was born. His right hand abandoned her hand and joined its greedy brother on her jewels. The lover in him, rejected, became the parent of the passionate robber. His hands tore at the diamonds.

Hidden among the rocks to the left of the road, a watching man had, for some seconds, which seemed to him long nights of impenetrable blackness, held a gun to his shoulder with a steady hand, his finger upon the trigger. One reason alone had prevented him from firing, a strange but tremendous indecision in his heart.

He did not know whether he wished to shoot the woman or the man upon the road.

While he waited, still as the rocks which concealed him, the woman started back from the Spahi, and the Spahi's hand left her hand and darted at her jewels.

Then the man among the rocks knew. He moved slightly and he leveled his gun at the Spahi.

But before he could fire there came upon the Spahi a rushing figure, whose bright-green robe showed clearly in the moonbeams, and the hands that clutched the diamonds broke the chain that united them, as the Spahi sank down upon the road with a knife between his shoulders.

A long, fierce cry went up in the night.

Sir Claude leaped into the road. As his arms went round his wife the cry rose up again:

"Allah! Allah! Allah!"

Then it died away in a whimper that was like an animal's, as the mad Marabout dropped down to his knees beside the Spahi's body, and began carefully to pick up, one by one, the jewels that were scattered over it, gleaming in the moonbeams like crystals of the desert.

When day dawned the Arab boy strolled lazily along the bank of the river till he reached his nook in the rocks. There he squatted down, folded his burnoose round his slim body, drew forth from his breast his little flute of reed, and, putting his dusky fingers to the holes, sent forth airily to the sun the melody that was like caprice personified in music.

THE END.

First Aids to Matrimony



By Dorothy Dix

THE polite fiction obtains that marriages are made in heaven. This romantic viewpoint is particularly popular in America, where it is held to be highly improper for parents to make any move toward securing good husbands for their daughters, and immodest for girls to manifest any interest in the subject themselves.

The conventional theory is that the matter is on the knees of the gods, and that in due season husbands will be provided like manna in the wilderness for sustenance of the faithful. Unfortunately this miracle does not always come off for every woman. The supply of manna gives out. There are not enough husbands to go around, and these are unevenly divided. Some women get three or four, while others get none; but neither the old maids nor their parents realize that the reason that they did not share in the dispensation was their own fault, because they did not put themselves, as old-fashioned Methodists used to say, in an attitude to receive the blessing.

In affairs of the heart women are at a frightful disadvantage. It is a woman's business to get married. It is what she is born for, what she is reared for; the thing for which she is trained from her cradle. It is the career in which she finds her greatest happiness and profit. It is the sphere in life in which she is most useful to the world, and yet she has always to work under cover, in secret and by stealth.

Every one knows that every young girl would like to marry if she could find the right man, and that she is, in reality, spending her days in a never-ending husband hunt; and yet she has to affect an utter indifference to her object, and pretend to shun the chase when she is pursuing it as hard and fast as she can run.

Men do nothing to ease the situation. Indeed, intuitively knowing that they are bound to be caught at last, they seem to take a fiendish delight in making the final capture as difficult as possible. They seldom give a woman the satisfaction of surrendering at once to her little bow and spear. This is why the impetuous lover, who proposes the first time he ever meets a woman, almost always gets her. She is so thankful to be relieved of all the trouble and anxiety and worry of playing a suitor until she is worn out before she lands him, that she marries him out of sheer gratitude.

Few men, however, possess this generous spirit. The most of them drag out the preliminary proceedings as far as they can. They are full of attentions that may indicate intentions, or nothing. They call and call, but do not pop the question. They talk sentiment, but not love. They ask a girl to walk with them everywhere under the sun except to the altar. They say everything except the word that would clinch matters.

This places a woman in a most trying position. She dares not let go, and she is afraid to hold on. It is equally dangerous to use mild or strenuous measures. She hesitates to freeze a man out who may possibly be serious; yet she

trembles to think that she may be wasting her youth on one who is only a trifler. She may like him too well to be willing to cut off any chance of his asking her to marry him, but she does not love him well enough to want to take the risk of having to wear the willow of spinsterhood for his sake the balance of her days.

Thus it will be seen that no problem is of more vital importance to women than how to bring tentative love-making to a climax, and to force ambiguous and dilatory *Romeos* to declare themselves —to either put up or shut up; to file their claims or else make way for some one who will.

Since we have all agreed that love is not a thing to be handled in a straightforward and open manner, this question can be settled only by diplomacy. A woman cannot come out flat-footed and ask a man what he means to do, and whether she is wasting time upon him or not; but she can keep heaving lead, and thus ascertain to a nicety whether his affections are drifting out into the deep current of love or are merely stuck on the barren sand-bank of platonic friendship.

Of course if her line shows shallow water, she is wise to cut herself adrift without more ado; but if her soundings convince her that there is enough love on which to float a matrimonial bark, and the man still hesitates to speak, either through bashfulness or a last frantic clinging to liberty, it is up to the woman to lend him a helping hand, and give him a final shove that lands him in connubial bliss before he knows it.

As a matter of fact women do do this, as is abundantly proven by the experience of men, not one in a million of whom ever proposed when and how and where in the way he had planned to do it.

Suddenly in some unexpected time and place he found himself asking a woman to let him assume her board-bill and shopping-ticket; and he wondered, as he did it, how he came to be doing it just then. And only the woman could have answered the question.

By what means women precipitate the psychological moment when a man comes to the point is a feminine secret so profound and so sacredly kept, that women even deny that it exists. No daughter of Eve has yet revealed the method by which she induced a balky suitor to at last leap over the matrimonial hurdle; and yet most married women could contribute some valuable information on the subject if they would.

Naturally, since men differ in character and disposition and peculiarities, each suitor has to be dealt with on an individual platform; but there are certain broad principles that apply indiscriminately to the treatment of all men, and that no woman can afford to ignore. For it is undeniably true that whether a man proposes or not depends largely upon circumstances and the facilities afforded him; and these are in the woman's hands. The foolish virgin throws obstacles in the way. But the wise virgin keeps her lamp trimmed and burning and turned down low in the back parlor when a man begins coming regularly to see her.

Thus it is obvious that the first aid to matrimony is to surround a man who has begun to manifest the symptoms of the tender passion with the proper environment. Love, like certain diseases, can best be treated when the patient is isolated.

The falling off in matrimony which is so much deplored by moralists and political economists is due principally to modern architecture. In these days when it is the fashion to make the whole lower story of a family residence open together, with nothing but portières separating the rooms, and dividing the parlor where Maud and her beau sit from the library where mother and father, and little sister and little brother, and grandma, and Uncle Tom, and Aunt Jane, and the next-door neighbor are gathered together within easy ear-shot, there is no place in which a man can safely make love. Nor is there any abiding-place for Cupid in a two-by-four flat.

No one will argue for a minute that the girls who live in the country and

little country towns are any more attractive than city girls or flat-dwellers, yet, except in New England, where old maidism is epidemic, in the provinces all girls have plenty of beaus; and most of them get married, whereas the preponderance of old maids in the cities is simply appalling.

This is only to be explained by the advantages that old-fashioned houses offer for spooning—advantages totally lacking in the artistic grilled work, open vista-ed, unromantic habitation of today. Prudent, indeed, is the father of daughters if in the construction of the family mansion he provides good solid doors behind which a man can propose in peace, and cozy nooks that invite to sentiment; and, above all, a nice, vine-hung porch, where a discreet girl may get moonlight effects that will make a man yearn to hold her hand, and say things that he never thought of saying five minutes before.

Social parents are also a discourager of courtship. No man feels inclined to make love to a girl whose mother is always on the scene. It is the coming shadow of the mother-in-law always in his house that warns him off. Neither has he the nerve to get sentimental when, every time as he screws his courage to the sticking point, the rustle of papa's paper in the next room warns him that the family are assembled around the evening lamp waiting for returns.

It takes the solitude of two; it requires a certainty from interruption; it calls for an unwavering confidence that there is no eavesdropping and no espionage to give a man enough audacity to propose; and, unless a girl and her family have sufficient intelligence to provide these stage accessories, they cannot hope to pull off a good match.

Music that hath charms to soothe the savage breast and perform other miracles, has also power to make a man propose. There are few more successful ways of inspiring a sentimental feeling in a man's breast than by steeping him in love-days. It is certainly undeniable that a ballad full of longing and despair and hopeless affection can convert an able-bodied man who, two minutes before, had no yearning except for his dinner, and who was full of complacency and self-sufficiency, into a lonesome, melancholy, sighing, romantic mush, that any woman can marry if she chooses.

It is also one of the beauties of music that one can voice in it longings that are perfectly proper, but that would be horrid and forward if said out in plain words without any tra-las to them.

So many a man who starts out blithely to carol, "I Cannot Live Without Thee," or "Oh, Promise Me," has found himself saying things that let him in for a breach of promise suit or matrimony before he got through.

That women fully appreciate the advantages of music as a first aid to matrimony needs no further proof than the fact that the girl who has spent thousands of dollars learning how to play the piano, or to sing, almost invariably gives up her music the minute she marries. It has served its purpose in helping her secure a husband, and she has no further use for it.

The chafing-dish is also a valuable ally of Cupid's, especially when the desirable parti who has been hanging around a woman is a widower, a middle-aged club-man, or a sensible and heavy-set young man whose embonpoint gives visible evidence of the place in which his heart is located.

It is a strange thing that so few women appreciate the value of home as a background, for there is nothing that inclines a man's heart toward matrimony like the sight of domestic comfort and good eating. Many daughters have done well in hurrying up a laggard suitor, but none do better than the one who refuses to go to a restaurant to supper after the play, and insists upon her escort taking her home and letting her prepare for him a rabbit or a lobster Newburg after her own particular recipe.

Given a quiet room, a table spread for two, a pretty woman who knows how to cook, sitting under the glow of a red-shaded lamp, and the man who does not settle the trade right then and there,

for fear some other man will get an option on the treasure, is a case-hardened bachelor on whom it is folly to waste any more smiles and electric light.

Concerning whether a woman should best do the love-making or leave it to the man, opinions differ even among widows, and the course to pursue depends upon the man. If he is very bashful or very lazy the pathway must be smoothed before him. With such a man a proposal must be "nursed," as business men say of a precarious deal. He must be given every opportunity of speaking, and beguiled along the roads of sentiment by means of sitting under palms at dances, drifting in boats on placid lakes at summer resorts, and quiet evenings at home; and the girl should always keep her lips pursed to a "Yes," for he will never reach the point but once; and it is then or never with her.

It is generally held that the best way to make the man who halts between "I will" and "I won't" take the final plunge into the holy estate of wedlock is for a woman to play coy. Undoubtedly this is effective with some men. There are those who are attracted only by the unattainable, and who are piqued into ardor by being flouted. They possess the spirit of the chase; and the more a woman runs from them the keener they are about pursuing her. This type of man never marries a woman unless he thinks some other man is dying to get her; and wise in her day and generation is the girl who always keeps a rival suitor up her sleeve, so to speak, to play at the critical moment. It is a trump-card that seldom fails to take the trick. It would amaze many a comfortable old bachelor, happy in his self-elected celibacy, to know how many married men pity him because they have been led to believe that he is leading a blighted life because they snatched their Marias or Susans or Janes away from him.

On the other hand, with another variety of the genus homo, nothing brings about the wedding-day so quickly as for a man to find that a dear, innocent, clinging little thing is in love with him. This is particularly effective with modest men; and great has been the reward of the artless creature who has allowed herself to be surprised kissing the photograph of a commonplace-looking business man with a double chin and a bald head. Perhaps he had never before in his mind differentiated that girl from any other girl. He hadn't even thought of her as anything but nice and pleasant, and, left to himself, he would never have dreamed of such a thing as falling in love with her.

But the knowledge that she has fallen in love with him goes to his head like strong drink. It would shock him to death to know that his sister had let a man see that she was in love with him before he had made any affectionate moves toward her; but this is a different case. She couldn't help it, poor child. Poor, dear, sweet little thing! And she's such an honest little thing, too! And got such good judgment! And taste! He'd be a brute if he turned her down; and besides, he hasn't got the nerve to do it. He resolves to be friendly. To let her down easily, and—and then he takes another look into the eyes, where he sees his image magnified to heroic proportions; and when he goes home he takes with him the measure of her engagement-finger in his vest pocket.

Twin brother to the man who does not know what he wants in a wife until the woman calls his attention to it, and persuades him that she is the goods, is the dilly-dallying swain who monopolizes a woman's society and runs up her coal-bill under the guise of friendship that is too sentimental to be shown the door, and not sentimental enough for a wedding-ring. Such a man is the dog in the manger who does not really wish to marry himself, and yet is not willing for the woman to marry anybody else. He has the pleasure of her society without having to pay her bills. He feels free to make unlimited drafts upon her sympathy, but he does not give her the liberty that a wife would have to tell him her troubles. He goes to her to be coaxed, cajoled, petted, amused, and he

escapes feminine nerves and tempers and curl-papers.

It is a condition of affairs that appeals to many men and no women; and one which the astute maiden makes haste to break up. The minute she sees she is becoming a habit to a man, she collects dividends on her knowledge, for men are the slaves of habit. She removes herself at once and violently out of his orbit. She puts as many miles as possible between herself and her dilatory suitor. She leaves him nowhere to go; nobody to furnish him free entertainment; nobody to soothe him down when his feelings have been ruffled or his vanity hurt.

This wakes *Romeo* up. He doesn't know what to do with himself. He didn't realize how much *Juliet* was to him until she was gone; and when it begins to permeate his consciousness that he has to pay the piper he wires a proposal.

Finally, as a first aid to matrimony and a never-failing test as to what a man's feelings are toward a woman, the ancient but effective method of weeping is to be commended. If a man entertains the slightest tenderness toward a woman, it reduces him to a perfect pulp to see her grieve. He is bound to comfort her in any way that seems effective.

Now, a man cannot console a woman without calling her "my darling," "dear," "little one," "little girl," and so forth, and applying other terms of endearment to her. He also has an instinctive impulse to put his arm around her and let her sob out her woes on the second button of his waistcoat; and when he does this everything is over but having mama announce the engagement. A man doesn't always mean matrimony when he starts out to wipe the tears from the eyes of the widow and the orphan girl; but he generally lets himself in for it before he finishes.

In reality, tears are the true trial by water of a man's sentiments; and therefore when a woman weeps before one of whose real intentions she is uncertain, and he points her to the comforts of religion, or the consolations of philosophy instead of inviting her to bedew his necktie, she had as well abandon hope and center her young affections on some one else.

But why multiply examples of the first aids to matrimony? Every married woman could amend this imperfect list — if she only would!

DUSK, AND THE DAY IS DONE

DUSK, and the day is done,
Homeward I turn;
Bright as the setting sun
Its fires do burn.

Dusk, and the shadows fold
On the hill's breast;
Dark 'gainst the fleeing gold.
In the far west.

Dusk, and the waking stars
Glimmer on high
Like candles newly lit
In the gray sky.

Dusk, and I see your face,
Soft lips apart;
Waiting to find your place,
Near to my heart.

BETH SLATER WHITSON.

THE SPANKING OF AGNES

By Mary H. Vorse



I MUST confess that I had a certain satisfaction in the fact that Agnes wasn't, after all, so perfect. I hadn't seen her, before she came to visit us, since she was a little mite of a baby, and fascinating enough. But my sister Maria is fond of saying about her:

"It's wonderful how a little, young woman like William's wife can bring a child up so well."

It may be that I am sensitive, but I always feel that there is a certain implication that, with my great number of years and greater experience, I have not done nearly so well with my family as Estelle has; and that's why I have a sneaking joy in the fact that Estelle couldn't cope with Agnes much better than I can cope with my wayward offspring; and I, for one, love Estelle all the better for being an ordinary mother like all of us.

The reason that I imagine that Maria thinks this is, that whenever Jimmie does something he oughtn't to, or Edith annoys Maria, or Osborn comes home late to his meals, Maria is sure, within the next twenty minutes, to mention the perfections of Agnes—who, I may explain, is my little six-year-old niece, my brother William's child.

During the last two weeks Maria hasn't said so much about Agnes; but of course I realize it's easier to fancy a child perfect whom one only sees at rare intervals than the children one lives with. William and Estelle and Agnes have been our guests for the last two weeks, and I'm afraid that some of poor Maria's ideals about Estelle's wonderful training have been shattered. I'm afraid that I'm not as sorry for it as I should be. Personally, the real Agnes appeals to me more than the stiff and starched little paragon that Maria has always painted her. In fact, I suspect Maria of having allowed her imagination to run riot in describing Agnes. There is no doubt that Agnes is captivating; but nothing will make me believe that a child of her temperament was perfect at home all the time, or as clean as Maria seems to remember, or as silent in her play.

Of course, Agnes walked right straight into all our hearts. Henry openly lamented that our Edith had outgrown her babyhood; Osborn rode her around the house on his shoulder; Saraphy, our old cook, made cooky men, and even elephants, out of cooky paste for her; and Maria did everything a doting aunt can do to spoil a well-brought up niece. Add to this that the child's hours were all upset, that she was allowed liberties that she never was at home, and it is no wonder to me that she broke through her mother's fine training.

I noticed that Agnes wasn't always so impeccably obedient as Maria had wished me to believe she was; but the crucial scene occurred in Maria's very room. Agnes was playing in the corner. Her starched white piqué, with little ruffles and a fascinating rosette on

each shoulder, had a bedraggled appearance. Her hair matched her dress. Estelle looked at her daughter rather wearily, I thought.

"I'm sure," said she, "I don't see why that child should get so much dirtier here than at home. Once I dress her for the afternoon at home, she's just as careful about her clothes; but here it really doesn't pay to dress her up. She's dirty as a little pig ten minutes afterward."

Agnes had apparently been oblivious of all our grown-up conversation. She now remarked with that distinct pronunciation that Maria has always so praised her for:

"I like pigs," and relapsed into her play again.

What happened next wouldn't have been so bad if Maria's intimate friend, Mrs. Silbey, hadn't arrived at that moment for a cup of tea. She brought with her her starched and ruffled little girl, Lucy; an anemic child, with watery-blue eyes, and what seems to me an abnormal knowledge of the Scriptures for her years.

Agnes looked up from her play at the newcomer, who was a little older than she, and kept on playing serenely, with the superb indifference of a child. I don't think that she fancied Lucy Silbey's looks.

"Come and speak to the little girl, dear," suggested Maria.

"Don't you want to play with that nice little girl?" asked Estelle.

"And so this is little Agnes. What are you playing, dear?" said Mrs. Silbey.

They all spoke at the same time.

Agnes answered only one of these questions.

"Playing with angleworms," she said, with her characteristic distinctness which allows of no misinterpretation of her meaning.

"What!" said Maria.

"What's that, darling?" said Estelle.

While Mrs. Silbey only said:

"Dear me!" and Lucy withdrew, frightened, behind her mother.

"Worms, I said," replied Agnes, perfectly unperturbed. "Worms. I'm playing with them. She can play with them, too, if she wants to," she continued, with a touch of the graciousness which Maria has led me to expect as one of Agnes' invariable attributes; "only she mustn't sqush 'em. They sqush awful easy if you're not careful. I've squshed two already, and they won't last if they keep on getting squshed like that.

There was a silence after this. Lucy was the first to break it.

"I don't think I care to play with them, mama," she remarked.

"Do you mean, Agnes," said Estelle, in that polite tone that she makes a point of always in addressing her daughter, "that you're playing with earthworms in your Aunt Maria's room?"

"Yes, mama," replied Agnes, with prompt cheerfulness. "I dug 'em myself—I dug 'em where Jimmie gets his fish-worms," she went on proudly. "Worms grow awful large in this town. At home," she continued, looking at her Aunt Maria with trustful, round eyes, "I never find any but little weeny ones in puddles; but here they're just as long—as long——"

A shiver ran through the room. I was the only one who retained my self-possession. I am afraid I was as irritatingly calm as I sometimes find my sister.

"Hasn't mama often told you not to say 'awful,' darling?" was the inadequate thing that poor Estelle was able to bring out.

There ensued, for a moment, silence; then Estelle gathered herself together. She has certain theories about the independence of the child, and directing a child's mind, and things of that kind.

"I don't think that worms are a very nice thing to play with, do you, dear?" she began.

"Yes, mama," replied Agnes. "I like worms," she went on, with dreamy eyes directed toward Maria, who sat rigid at the idea of a box of worms in her immaculate sitting-room. "I like them; they move both ways; they haven't any feelings. I don't think," she continued—she was the only one who seemed to

find much to say on the subject—"that they even mind being squshed—much. They're only full of earth, anyhow." Agnes, you see, is a very observing child; she's been taught to be so. "They——" she continued.

But Estelle was in no mood for listening to Agnes' studies of the earthworm.

"Carry them right out of doors, darling, and throw them away. I know your Aunt Maria doesn't like worms in her room."

"Why not, mama? Why not?" asked Agnes.

Estelle is one of those women who always give their children reasons. This time, however, the good old method which I personally have found more successful in the rearing of a family prevailed.

"Don't ask me why, Agnes," she said; and, though her voice was sweet, I knew the tension which was underneath. "Take those worms right out of doors—please," she added; and "please" came as an afterthought.

"I don't see why, mama," said Agnes. "You don't tell me why. They don't make any noise, and you said Aunt Maria didn't like noise."

"Don't argue with me, Agnes," said Estelle. "Take those worms away, as I've told you to do."

At this Agnes lifted up her voice and wept:

"I can't have cats," she wailed, "nor dogs—they track dirt. Worms don't track anything; they don't make any noise; and I can't even have them. And she won't tell me her reasons," added this modern child.

There are times when the old-fashioned methods will prevail, even with the child-culturist. Scratch the child-culturist and you will find a human being. Estelle picked up the box of worms with one hand and took her daughter with the other.

"Ow! You're hurting me, mama! Ow! You stepped on one!"

With an exclamation of disgust Estelle hurried from the room, holding her daughter's pets in one hand and her daughter in the other. I noticed a long, slimy streak on Maria's clean floor.

Estelle returned after a moment with a set expression that I had never before seen upon her pretty young face; then conversation tried to take its natural course, although from afar we could all hear the sounds of indignant weeping. I think that Agnes had placed herself in a spot where she knew her sobs would resound.

Presently I heard Jimmie come in, and my well-trained ears heard him say to Agnes:

"Watchyer cryin' fer?"

This was a great concession from Jimmie, for Jimmie was the only one of our family who hadn't succumbed at once to Agnes' charms. He has no use for girls, anyway. He doesn't care for babies of either sex, and a girl baby is to him a peculiarly unnecessary and even terrifying object. And added to her natural disadvantages, Agnes, on arriving, had done a thing that no one of us would have dared to do. She kissed Jimmie; and kissed him before us all, which caused crimson shame to mount to his face. And, what's more, she continued to kiss him whenever she happened to want to.

Like children of her age, she was quite impervious to Jimmie's snubs. She regarded him as a hero, and would hurl herself upon him and cause Jimmie to writhe by saying: "I love you, Cousin Jimmie!" in tones of deepest emotion.

So ever since Agnes' arrival he has been skulking about in corners, trying to avoid her brazen, feminine advances, for to be kissed by a girl, however small, seems to Jimmie unbearable. Then, too, he had a natural antipathy to Agnes because he had heard about her perfections from his Aunt Maria.

So I was surprised at this budding sign of humanity. I could not hear Agnes' answer very plainly, as it was broken with sobs, but I heard Jimmie's. It was:

"Don't you care! That's just like wimmin, always makin' a fuss about things where there ain't no harm. If you want to play with worms, play with

'em in my room—when I'm not there," he added hastily. "I don't mind 'em."

Maria had also heard this remark, and I saw her lips tighten. And for what happened later she blames Jimmie to this day; but I don't see, what with Agnes' natural passion for the earthworm, why she should have put it all on poor Jimmie's head.

It was not long before we heard Agnes approaching. She came into the room all smiles. Her crumpled white dress had been changed to a clean checked pinafore, and her face and hands were washed.

"Here comes my dear little daughter," said Estelle approvingly. "I told her," she explained, "that she might come back after she had become reasonable."

"Now you can play with this dear little girl if you want to," said Maria.

Lucy came forward shyly. Agnes, however, only smiled at Lucy encouragingly, but let her suggestions for games fall flat. We four women kept our eyes upon the children while we made perfunctory talk. I noticed that Agnes' left hand was closed with suspicious firmness—not having two available hands impedes one in the playing of any game. Estelle noticed it, too.

"What have you got in your hand, darling?" she asked Agnes.

Agnes opened her little right hand and held it up with a guileless, wondering air, as though surprised that her mother should ask such a question.

Estelle flushed ever so slightly.

"Your other hand, I mean," she said.

Agnes clenched her other pink fist tightly. She shuffled her feet.

"Nothing, mama," she said.

"Agnes, open your hand," said Estelle, with a touch of sternness.

Then came a wail from Lucy.

"Ow!" she screamed. "It's a worm—I saw its head wiggle; she's got a worm in her hand, mother! She's got another worm!"

"Agnes," Estelle began, with anger which was meant to be just and firm, "mother's surprised——"

But this was too much for Agnes. She stamped her foot.

"He wasn't hurting anybody!" she roared. "He was a clean one—I washed him off—I washed him off in the basin in our room, and I washed my hands. He was just as clean—as clean—and now she went and told of me! Here, take it!" she said; and, throwing a long, shiny pink earthworm upon Lucy, she fled from the room.

We were quite busy for the next few minutes, because, as Mrs. Silbey says, Lucy is one of those nervous, high-strung children, and she considered this an appropriate time for showing how nervous and high-strung she could be. We calmed her down after a while—it took cake and preserves to do it—and Mrs. Silbey finally led her daughter away, saying that Lucy had suffered a terrible nervous shock.

It was after she had gone that Estelle and Maria and I talked about what the fitting punishment of Agnes should be. Agnes had been promptly sent to her room while we calmed Lucy Silbey's hysteria. It was I who had to remove the earthworm from the room.

"Estelle," said Maria, "I feel there is only one thing to do. I know how your theories are against it, and I don't like to mention to you what it is. Still—I feel there is only one kind of punishment that will impress this sufficiently upon Agnes."

"It is so unlike her," Estelle wailed. "I don't see what's come over her!"

Maria's lips tightened. I knew that she thought it was the influence of my poor, pernicious Jimmie which had come over Agnes.

"You don't respect your own mother any the less," Maria continued; "because, when you were young, she—ah—she punished you. I'm sure I don't respect my mother any the less. Mother always—ah—punished William and Editha when it became necessary; and, though young, we understood that it was for our good. I know, Estelle dear," Maria continued; "that it will be hard for you, but these things sometimes have to be faced, and I don't believe that you will find any other way of getting Agnes back to her normal state of mind."

Estelle rocked back and forth desperately.

"I can't do it, Sister Maria," she moaned. "I can't do it!"

"Be firm, Estelle," said Maria. "Think of your own childhood. There are times in a child's life—spare the rod, you know."

"It seems to me an awful thing," said Estelle, "to strike a defenseless child."

"I'm not talking of striking a defenseless child," said Maria, with the first touch of good sense that I had seen her show that day. "I wouldn't tell any one to strike any child. What I'm talking about, Estelle, is a good old-fashioned spanking—if you ask me what Agnes needs! I tell you, Estelle, you'll have trouble yet with Agnes if you don't nip her right in the bud."

Estelle went gloomily to her own room to think it over.

"It don't seem to me that Agnes has done anything so very dreadful, Maria," I remonstrated; "and I think it's a great pity to spoil Estelle's visit by putting ideas like that in her head."

"If justice were justice," Maria replied cryptically, "Agnes isn't the only one in this house that ought to be spanked."

With that I fully agreed, though the person that I thought needed the spanking was not the poor little boy that Maria had in mind.

Later Estelle returned pale and spent with her struggle.

"You may be right, Sister Maria," she said, "but I shall have to talk it over with William before I take any decisive step in the matter. I wouldn't take the responsibility of punishing Agnes—in the way you suggest—without his consent." Then she broke down altogether. "Oh, I can't do it!" she wailed. "I can't do it!"

Meantime the culprit had been let out of her room while sentence was pending, and had given a bond of good behavior. Agnes is an astute child, and understood perfectly what was in the air, as I found by her telling Jimmie all about it.

"It's all Aunt Maria," he growled to me; and here chivalry, I think, awoke for the first time in his breast. "It's a mean shame to lick a little girl like that, just 'cause she's got sand an' ain't afraid of things. 'Soon's girls ain't afraid of things, then Aunt Maria wants to lick 'em!" And he went sulkily from the room. Later I observed him showing his rabbits to Agnes.

The trouble with Agnes is that she knows all about child-culture, too. She knows that a child ought to have her independence, and ought to be given reasons, and that it is very, very wrong for a mother to spank a child, just as well as Estelle or William do—though William didn't know that spanking was wrong until he married Estelle.

When he came home with Henry that evening the whole matter was put before him. His first speech betrayed the normal man's point of view.

"Spank her," he told his wife, "if you want to. But you needn't expect me to interfere. Manage it the way you feel you ought to."

"I can't do it, William," said Estelle. "I'm in daily contact with the child. It will mean more to her, and at the same time shock her less, coming from you."

Meantime Agnes hovered upon the outside of the discussion. She didn't want to be spanked, of course, but she had a certain morbid curiosity, one could see, in the whole affair. She never had been spanked; there was a certain fascination of the unknown to her in the possibility of its happening to her; above all, it was plain to see that she didn't think that it would happen. The whole subject fascinated her immensely, and not along the paths of repentance that Maria and Estelle would have hoped for.

"Were you ever spanked?" I heard her asking Jimmie.

"Lots of times," said Jimmie.

"Who spanked you?" asked Agnes, with her morbid curiosity to the fore.

"Sometimes father, but mostly ma," replied Jimmie laconically. "'Tain't nothin'," he went on. "Don't you care, Agnes. They won't spank you hard, anyway."

"I don't believe they'll spank me," said Agnes. "Perhaps mama will—and

if she does," she added vindictively, "I'll never love her any more. But if mama makes papa do it, he never will," continued this student of human nature.

After tea Estelle and William walked up and down in front of the house, and the whole thing was decided. I saw at once from poor William's manner just what had happened when they came in together. Agnes was to be spanked and he was to do it. Gloom settled upon our family circle. Estelle even had appointed an hour for the execution—for that was the way they acted about it—so that they could both feel sure that there was neither anger nor injustice in it. At ten-thirty the next morning Agnes was to be spanked.

This information had been imparted to Agnes, but it did not seem to have the subduing effect on her that it should have had. She was provokingly jaunty over the whole matter—showing off, I think, to Jimmie, that she could take a spanking as well as any boy.

Estelle and William looked at their daughter with sad, pain-stricken eyes, while Agnes ignored them both.

"You see," Maria said, "she needs it. Nothing else will settle her."

And to prove how much she needed it, the well-trained, perfect Agnes here stuck out her tongue at her Aunt Maria.

William and Estelle waited for the fatal hour with every appearance of guilt; and William tried to wriggle out of it. I could hear him saying things like: "You'd better do it, after all, Estelle. My hand's too heavy; I might hit her harder than I intended to."

At which Estelle would shiver resolutely. "No, William, it would be better coming from you."

At exactly twenty-five minutes past ten Estelle led her child up-stairs. It was only now that it fully came home to Agnes what was going to happen. She began to weep. William followed moodily, acting as though he were about to murder his daughter. Then from above I heard loud yells and screams from Agnes. But louder than these I heard Estelle's voice. The child-culturist had vanished; the reasonable woman had vanished; there remained nothing but the primitive mother fighting for her young. In a voice shrill beyond recognition I heard her cry:

"You shall not strike that poor, little defenseless child, William! Give her to me! I will not have my child struck by you!"

"But you told me to spank her!" came William's voice. "She's been naughty, and you told me to spank her."

"I won't have you strike Agnes," Estelle screamed hysterically. "Nobody shall strike her. I don't care if she *has* been naughty. If anybody ever strikes her it shall be me. Leave her alone, William Travers!"

"Now, see here, Estelle," said William sternly. "I didn't want to spank Agnes, but you told me to."

"Give me my child!" came the shrill voice of the primitive mother; and she bore her unspanked and unrepentant daughter into another room, and slammed the door, where I heard her soothing the indignant roars of Agnes.

Poor William came down-stairs dazed. He hadn't wanted to spank Agnes; he had been bullied into it, and then he had been berated for trying to do what he didn't want to.

Henry, who, together with me, had heard the whole scene, met him in the hall. He slapped William on the back.

"Don't you care, old fellow," I heard him say. "I don't understand women, either."

And together the two men left the house.

The COAST of TRAGEDY



By Ada Woodruff Anderson

KATHERINE stood in the doorway of the little portable cabin that seemed like a doll-house set in a niche under the bare shoulder of the mountain. Down on her left the lieutenant was making his way to the station of the infant railroad which ran open flat cars from the mines to the seaport. His last words rang, stinging, in her ears, but she did not watch his departure; she was waiting for her husband, who, directly below her, was coming over the spongy levels from the Sunset claim.

Mark Rollins was worth watching. Even at the worst, when he was most indifferent, she was proud of him; the way he held his head, the swing of his broad shoulders; his clear, direct gaze. At last he reached the top of the slope and stopped near her with a brief word of recognition.

"The lieutenant is ordered to Fort Liscom," she said directly. "He came to say good-by."

"Yes, I saw him." Rollins turned his back to her and stood looking off to the low hills which divided the tundra from the sea.

"He has been out from the barracks very often this summer," she began, explaining what her listener already well understood. "We knew the same people and places in New England. I—encouraged him to come; his visits helped to break the loneliness when you were away at the mine." She paused, but Rollins was silent, and she went on. "I must tell you what he said, Mark. It's my—duty. It's monstrous, but you ought to know. He said—a good many things. He said the Sunset had pinched out. And he said: 'Mark Rollins married you for your money, and now he's—spent it—he don't care—what—*becomes of you.*'"

It had been hard to say; the words caught in her throat. Rollins swung around; she could not meet his straight, searching look. A hot wave of color surged to her temples and left her face white. She had expected he would deny it; that he would say what he thought of the lieutenant, and—of her. But he did not. He only moved to the corner of the cabin, and, bracing his shoulder slightly on the wall, turned his eyes again to the hills.

"I see," he said at last; "I see, Katherine; it's the end. I've been expecting it. And the lieutenant was right about the Sunset; I've seen that coming, too, though I wouldn't own it—not with the Mattie panning out so handsomely next below. I might as well—better, perhaps—have staked your money at roulette. Your aunt, if she knew the game, would tell you so. And she was right, Katherine." He paused a breathing space, and went on slowly, steadying the fluctuations that were almost breaks in his deep, soft voice. "It was an impossible marriage. What could a college-bred girl, a passing tourist on a comfortable steamship, know of life up here in the Alaska wilderness? And I knew all about it; the uncertainty, the privation, and meanness of every day. I was mighty unfair to you, and I can't undo the mistake. But I'll do the best I can, Katherine. I'll pay back your money—with interest. I pledge myself to within a year. And I'll take you

down to the States the first steamer, and at Seattle help you to—secure a divorce."

Katherine started. She moved a step toward him and stopped, staring at his broad, uncompromising back. Heat flamed in her fine gray eyes; the color burned again in her cheeks, two crimson spots. But she lifted her chin high and set her lips; faint lines of self-suppression settled at the corners of her mouth.

"Very well," she said firmly. "The *Yakutat* is the first to sail. She goes in two days. I can be ready." And she added after a moment: "She takes the coast route, you know; she will carry the troops to Liscom."

The fourth night out, when the *Yakutat* had made the narrow passage from Bering Sea, and, turning, ran with the long Pacific swell toward Kenai Peninsula, Katherine stood alone in the bows. The moon, big and near in that crisp atmosphere, cast a broad roadway from the horizon, and the ship drove straight up this thoroughfare. The music of the cutwater shut off other sounds, and behind her a pile of miscellaneous freight, roofed by an inverted skiff, screened her from the passengers on the main deck; but the lieutenant, coming up from troop inspection, stopped in the shelter of the barrier to light a cigar, and, walking on around, found himself suddenly, for the first time, confronting her.

"Pardon me," he said conventionally, "I didn't know you were here. I was trying to elude some ladies who are waiting in ambush, down there amidships, I think, to make me sing."

He paused, but Katherine waited in silence, arching her brows a little, plainly surprised that, having found her there, he remained.

"But now I am here"—he threw his cigar over the side and went on impetuously—"I want to ask your pardon for—the rest. I'm leaving the ship in less than two days; I may never see you again. It would be something, those slow winter nights ahead, to remember you forgave me."

Still she was silent.

"You will not, then? You will not. Well, perhaps I deserve it. But think what I was facing. You hadn't told me you were coming out to the States. I believed I was leaving you there alone, to waste your life in that miserable hole."

"I wasn't alone," she answered at last. "I was glad to be there. I should have made you understand that. Oh, I see—I see—how much I was to blame."

"You to blame? You?" The lieutenant shook his head and smiled. "You, the straightest-laced little Puritan that ever stepped out of New England."

"That's just it," she answered. "I've been carefully, rigidly taught. I haven't the shadow of excuse. I know a man doesn't speak to a woman who is married, as you did to me, unless he is given the opportunity."

"Oh, yes, he does, sometimes. There are moments when the best man on earth forgets himself; and I'm a plain soldier, tremendously human; accustomed to say what I think, and to get most things I want. I felt baffled, miserable. I do yet, but——"

"Please!" She put up her hand in warning. 'Please don't say any more."

"But," he finished, "you don't know anything about it. You don't know what love is; you never will."

She drew back against the bulwark. For a silent moment her eyes met the lieutenant's.

"I do know," she said. "I do know. I've been taught to cover feeling, put it down; but underneath I'm the kind of woman to take life hard—pleasure or sorrow; the kind who can care deeply and for just one m. in a lifetime. Wait! Listen!"

She put up her hand again in swift warning, but the words on her lips as suddenly failed. She looked off up the brilliant roadway; her breath came hard and quick, as though she, too, climbed with the laboring ship. The lieutenant moved back a step to the wall of merchandise. He leaned, watching her, on the rim of the skiff.

"The nights were like these," she said

at last softly. "We could see the line of Malaspina Glacier and Mount St. Elias clear as day." Then she turned again to the lieutenant. "I have told you how I first met Mr. Rollins."

"Yes, yes." The lieutenant frowned. "He had been delayed as a witness in some mining lawsuit at Seattle; and, missing the direct steamer to home, he took an excursion ship sailing a few hours later. The passengers relied on him; he was better than a Cook's guide. Among other things, the captain asked him to pilot you on Malaspina, or was it Muir?"

"It was Muir. And it was perfect weather, with open water, so that the *Spokane* sailed close, and waited for a boat-load of us to go ashore. It was the greatest fun the way he managed those heavy and timid ladies on the ice; and he said he was glad he had missed that regular steamer, for he was having the 'time of his life.'"

She paused, with a fleeting smile, and looked off again to the far beginning of the brilliant thoroughfare. But the brief explanation was like the first thread of current seeping through a long-worn barrier. It became an outlet for pent emotions; and she went on, her voice deepening, vibrating to the unseen pressure, with an unaccustomed flow of words.

"At last we reached a beautiful causeway, the slenderest bridge over an abyss, with big caves stretching off in blue-green depths of mystery; and my Aunt Eleanor and the others were tired and afraid. Then, while they rested, he took my hand, and we went out alone. Midway there was a difficult column to pass, and he stopped and asked me if it was far enough. And I answered: 'Oh, no, it's splendid; I love it. I'm an adventurer; it's in the blood; the spirit of my Pilgrim mothers, I guess.'

"'It's the spirit a man needs up here in this new wilderness,' he said. 'The spirit of the one woman who is able to follow him, and hold him to his best, and make it worth while to win through.' We crept on, then, around the pillar; and Aunt Eleanor and the others were out of sight. It was like coming into a new world all our own. And he said: 'You are that one for me, little woman. Don't you know it?'"

Katherine's voice sank to almost a whisper, but it held its vibrant note. A light like a reflection of the shining sea, yet not a reflection, touched her face. The lieutenant, seeing, had nothing to say.

Then she looked at him. "You understand," she said steadily. "That was my hour. Whatever happens, whatever you hear about me, I want you to know it was worth *the cost*. Afterward I fell short; I disappointed him, and I allowed you sometimes to help me forget. I never thought of your side. I even used you, in a way, hoping to reach him; gain at least his interest."

Light footsteps, women's voices, came along the deck. The lieutenant pulled himself erect. "So you used me," he said softly. "You used me. Well, I forgive you. Good-by." He held out his hand, smiling a little and shaking his head. "I can afford to forgive you."

He dropped her hand and walked quickly around the barrier to meet the searchers. She waited, listening, while they retired gaily with him down the deck, then, lifting her glance from the place where he had stood, she saw her husband above on the bridge. He was smoking with the captain, and apparently enjoying one of the officer's yarns.

She turned and went a few steps farther into the bows. She stood for a long time, leaning with one arm on the high bulwark, and watching, without seeing, the cutwater cleaving the waves. Somewhere down amidships the lieutenant, supplemented by a male quartette began to sing "Heidelberg."

> But through the many years
> The thought of you, so good and true,
> Will fill our eyes with tears.

The last notes hung and drifted and died far off. The cutwater played an interlude. Then she heard her husband's step behind her. She turned and looked up.

"You feel the swell more here in the bows," he said. "It's easier amidships. Let me help you to your room."

"No," she answered, "I like it here. But wait. I want to speak to you. I must now—while I can. It has all been so hurried; we explained so little there at the Sunset that day. And you've avoided me since. I want you to know I shall never go back to Boston. Aunt Eleanor never could understand. She opposed the marriage all she could, but she doesn't believe in divorce. None of my people ever believed in it. To us it means family disgrace. If our women made mistakes no one else ever knew it; they kept their regrets to themselves, and took their punishment quietly to the end. I—am like the rest."

"That's all right, Katherine," he said, "you needn't go back. I'll fix that. And here in the West it's different. We believe in making the best of things. We live just once, and we are always ready to give each other a fresh start. And what is the use of spoiling both our lives? Why, I couldn't stand it, Katherine. Another man might, but I'm built of different stuff."

He squared his back and stood looking seaward. She laid her hand, steadying herself, on the bulwark. "All I want," she said, "is just a little—friendliness."

"Friendliness?" He swung around. "It takes a lot more than friendliness, Katherine; you ought to know it."

His hand closed over hers for an instant, gripping the railing; then he was gone.

Down the deck the lieutenant was singing "In Happy Moments." Katherine shivered. She pressed her fingers to her eyes. Her arm fell to the bulwark once more, and she dropped her face. Long afterward, when she looked off the bows again, the sea had lost brilliancy; the roadway had shortened; it ended in a bank of fog.

II.

Suddenly there was a great upheaval. The *Yakutat* pitched, plunging her bows under, struck, and settled back, shivering to her gunwales. Katherine was thrown against the house wall, and as violently back on the wheel. She grasped a spoke and righted herself, waiting. But presently the ship having ceased her maneuvers, she relaxed her hold, and went to the end of the bridge to look over the side. The hull, with the long swell washing her lower deck, rested on something solid; presumably a second rock.

She lifted her glance seaward, and stood for a moment watching the last life-boats, three distinct shapes trailing southwestward, under the breaking fog, toward the far settlement on Kenai Peninsula. Then she turned her face shoreward, where cliffs on cliffs raised impregnable breastwork and bastion against the forces of the Pacific. Parting one of these walls, and the only possible landing in sight, a glacier met the sea, and sloped up like a broad, paved highway to a white and shining mountain.

Rocky islets, fragments torn from the ramparts, broke the surface of the water; and, skirting one of them, a small, dark object rose on a swell and rode with it toward the glacier. Katherine came back to the house, and, taking the binocle from a locker near the wheel, watched this atom, which, through the instrument, became a skiff. How dexterously the man at the oars handled the cockle-shell; how he threw himself with each roller, easing her to a breaking crest, yet keeping leeway against the backwater.

Now he was close under the icy wall. Katherine wiped the glass hastily and looked again, leaning from the railing. The boat lifted to a final swell; it passed behind a projection where a streak of moraine met the sea, and, after a moment, swung back empty, broadside to the trough, and was lost.

She waited, straining her eyes, and presently the man emerged, slowly gathering foothold on the moraine, and pushed on up the glacier. She could see no more. Her hand trembled, and she put the instrument away.

"I'm glad he hadn't a glass," she said. "If he had seen me he would have

turned back, and that little boat couldn't have lived against the swell; or, even if he had been able to make it, it never could have carried—two."

She brushed her hand across her eyes and cast a slow glance over the deserted ship. Then suddenly a full consciousness of her extremity came over her. She began to call her husband, now that he was beyond possible hearing; she leaned out over the side to throw all her voice again and again in his name; she walked the bridge swiftly, aimlessly, locking and unlocking her hands.

But her panic was brief. The fortitude and resourcefulness of those generations of New Englanders rose strong in her; and on long trails into the Alaska wilderness she had learned to adapt herself to the unexpected.

She commenced to face the situation quietly, clearly. She knew that Rollins believed she had gone in one of the lifeboats, and that she would not be missed among the passengers until they all had made a landing. But the officers would notify the coast mail-steamer nearly due from Kodiak, and there would be a lookout. The little vessel might even be turned from her course with the hope of picking up the two who had stayed with the wreck.

Men liked Mark Rollins; he was worth troubling about. And it was the neighborhood of seal rocks. Any moment hunting Eskimos might sight the prize and swarm down on her. And the *Yakutat* had not changed her position; probably she would not unless the wind and sea rose. Sometimes wrecks lasted several days. And there was water right here in the wheel-house, and biscuits in the locker; her steamer-rug was there where she had dropped it on the floor.

Presently she seated herself on the top stair from the bridge. The fog trailed a last ragged end over a far promontory, and a red sun hung, burning, above the horizon. Finally it dipped from sight. An Alpine glow wrapped the coast and changed the sea to liquid fire. Then the sky cooled and the Pacific gathered immensity; it stretched away, pulsing, opal-lighted, limitless. A faint wind drew offshore, sharp with the breath of the glacier.

"I'm glad he understands the ice," she said aloud. "He will be all right. Of course he must have taken biscuits and a can or two of something, but his clothes will be wet through."

Her glance moved slowly down the inhospitable shore. Soon, if he did not happen on a native igloo, he would choose a sheltered place for the brief night. He would make a good fire, even without matches he knew ways, and in the morning, rested and dry, he would take up the tramp to the settlement. He would expect to find her there. If only—if only—she had gone in that starboard boat.

She dropped her face for a moment in her hands. Then she began to go over, event by event, the hours that hinged on the disaster. The pilot had mistaken an illumined patch of snow, shining through a rift in the fog, for one of the new and infrequent lights on that coast. Not fifteen minutes later the *Yakutat* had struck. She had worn off from the rock, filling at the bows. From the beginning the water had gained on the pumps, and the captain had groped on through the thick atmosphere, hoping to find a place to beach her, until the fires were out. There had been little panic. Aside from the lieutenant's disciplined company, the ship carried hardly a dozen passengers.

But Katherine had been in her cabin at the time of the shock, and Rollins had met her at the door.

"It's all right," he said quietly; "put on your coat. We may have to go in the boats, but there won't be room for your suit-case."

He found her purse, gathered up a few toilet things, which he helped her stow in her pockets; then, reaching around her for the steamer-rug, which was thrown across her berth, his sleeve brushed her shoulder. She felt his big frame tremble, and he caught her up off her feet in his arms and kissed her cheek, her mouth.

"Katherine, Katherine," he said. "This once—for the last time. I love you so."

The next instant he had put her down, and tramped quickly off up the companionway. She could only follow, gathering her breath, and, at the top of the stairs, he had left her with the other women, while he went forward on some errand for the captain. Later he had relieved the first officer below at the pumps.

But when the time came to leave the ship he was there, at her elbow, watching the starboard boat swing from the davits. The first, filled with troops, had already cleared, and the lieutenant came down the deck and joined the embarking group. He stood next to the taffrail waiting to help her, but she hesitated, listening to her husband.

He had said in an undertone to the first officer: "That makes your full load." And he added: "Take care of her, Walcott. I'll find a place in one of the port boats."

She had drawn back—some one stepped into her place—and turned to follow. But the crowd pressed, closing between them; and when she reached the empty saloon he had already passed through to the outer door. She stopped on the threshold. He was standing with the captain looking down into the last port boat.

"See here," he said, and laid his hand on the officer's shoulder, "they need you in charge. And think of my weight. I'd settle her to the rim and swamp her, probably, at the first swell. Come, captain, I'd sooner take my chances with the ship."

The captain had grasped his hand then; and, while he went down the side, she had stolen back and concealed herself in the saloon. She was not a large woman; for her height she was a little under weight. And if it came to a question; if it was impracticable to overtake and transfer her to that starboard boat, the captain would insist on her having his place. Rollins had not even looked into the cabin, and afterward, when she was sure the boats were beyond hail, and had come out to find him, she had discovered he had launched that skiff from the sinking bows, and was well on his course to the glacier.

At the recollection of that moment Katherine dropped her face again in her hands. The twilight, at that season never wholly gone, brightened; a soft illumination touched the mountain above the glacier; and the moon, mounting swiftly, like a stage Luna drawn by invisible cords, hung suspended over a painted coast. It was growing very cold. Frost sparkled on the steps; its rough needles frescoed the railing.

Finally she rose, and with cramping limbs began to walk the bridge.

"But it was a mistake," she said aloud. "I should have called him back; signaled right away. He is a good swimmer; he understands any water; he could have found a way to save us both. He will never forgive himself—when he knows; it will spoil his life. Oh, how I have blundered! From the start how I have blundered!"

The surface of the glacier stretched before Rollins like the frozen crests of a choppy sea. Sometimes an ice-gorge baffled him, rising like a crystal castle, block on block, with intricate detail, and flashing color from every beveled edge. Sometimes an abyss broke suddenly, and when the leap was impossible, or natural bridging failed, he made détours around, shaping a course always for a point where the white field met the rocky summit of a promontory.

At last he sank down on a hummock to rest. He looked seaward. The *Yakutat* was still there, afloat; though with that hole in her bows when the boats pulled away it had not seemed possible she could live an hour. But she had not drifted far; then he saw that she had settled. Her deck-lines amidships seemed awash. That explained it. She had struck again a sunken rock, at the moment she began to founder.

"I'd have found it mighty slow waiting," he told himself. "I'm glad I risked it in that skiff. Somebody's lost a pretty good little boat." He paused, sending a sympathetic thought to that unknown owner, inconvenienced by lack of transportation on some wilderness

river. "With the sea like this they will make the settlement to-morrow, and Katherine will find me missing. They'll tell her I stayed with the ship." He smiled a little, but the color rose in his face through the tan. "And I meant to—yes, I did—it simplified things for her—until I remembered about her money. I've got to refund that as I promised."

His clothes, still wet with sea-water, began to stiffen. He struck his crackling sleeves together; his hands; and, rising, pushed on.

"But I'm glad she went in the first officer's boat," he continued. "Walcott is nerve straight to bed-rock. He'll do all he can for her. There isn't a man there who wouldn't risk himself for her, if the time came; I know that. And it wasn't necessary for me to see her go. The lieutenant was standing ready to help her in. It was all safe. And I know how she took her place—chin up, eyes cool and steady—relying on the sailors to manage their business, just as she trusted the Eskimos to make the riffles that day we had to canoe it down from the Solomon Mines."

Presently he stepped out on a slender causeway which spanned a chasm forming a court in a group of caves. It was such a place he had crossed with Katherine that day on Muir.

"And she was a little afraid," he told himself softly, "though she wouldn't own it. I felt her hand shake in mine. But she liked it; the glacier was a new world to her, all color and light. And her little head was full of poetry. Even I was a part of it; something built on big, strong lines to fit in. I took an unfair advantage. I made her think she could be happy with a plain business proposition like me. I let her sacrifice herself. And she's tried not to show it; she's braced herself to see it through. She's been ready with her friendliness. Friendliness. Great God!"

He stumbled a little and stopped, staying himself with his hand on an upheaval of ice. But after a moment he pulled himself erect and pushed on off of the bridge and up the slippery incline to the summit of the promontory. When he came out on the cliff the sun was dipping in a blaze of glory to the horizon. Against the light a far headland lifted its cone darkly. Then, shading his eyes, he saw the funnel and masts of the wrecked vessel etched on the reddening sea.

"Strange how I cling to the sight of that ship," he said. "It's because she's the one human element; but I can't get rid of the feeling that there's some one aboard. It's impossible, of course. And Katherine's all right. She's all—right. She went in that starboard boat."

He dropped his hand and took up the tramp, with his head bent, picking footing mechanically along the broken crest of the promontory. The gentleness went out of his face; he set his lips, and his brows contracted in a frown.

"But," he said finally, "I wish that lieutenant was more of a man."

The grip of the North tightened. A firm crust formed in moist places and in gullies where, through midsummer, snow-drifts lingered on. When he could, he kept to the inland slopes, where the knobs of the cliffs screened him from the wind, which drew fitfully, now from the sea, now from the glacier; but always he followed the coast-line, shaping his course for the Kenai settlement.

At last in a grove of stunted spruce he stopped and collected some dead branches and made a fire. He lighted his match with great care, husbanding the small supply in his waterproof safe, as a man must beginning an uncertain trail in the wilderness. The moon rose and illumined the place with polar brilliancy. It was at the head of a narrow gorge on the edge of a snow-field; and, when his clothes were dry and he took up his march, he followed a stream which, fed by the snow, threaded the ravine to tide-water.

Below him, at the mouth, two mighty headlands enclosed a small cove that narrowed to a pass; the sheer wall of an island was set across this entrance like an unhinged door. Then presently, while he halted, choosing a way over the spreading stream, the heights flamed, and the Northern sun blazed

into the gorge. It struck the sand at his feet. He stooped and gathered up a handful, shading it; studying the colors he saw. He poured the sand into his hat and bent to scoop a little water, covering it. He turned the hat carefully, with a rotary motion, sifting, separating the grain, and drained off the surface wash. It left a sprinkling of coarse, free gold.

He repeated the test in different places with varying results, but with the showing always plain.

"It's all right," he said at last. "It's all right, little woman; I've got my chance to pay that money back."

He pushed on, looking about him, alert, thoughtful, taking a prospector's inventory of the surroundings.

"It won't take any capital this time," he told himself. "The water is here on the ground, and there is no tundra to drift through. I only have to get some sort of an outfit together. I wish —I wish I had that skiff." He stopped, turning his eyes to a bit of open showing beyond the side of the island. "It would have been practicable from this cove, and once aboard I could have rafted stuff from the ship."

He stood a thoughtful moment, then he moved forward a step, listening. The next instant a shout startled the solitudes, and an umiak swung around the end of the island and made the pass. The brown sail dropped to the long, tan-colored hull. The little vessel grounded, lifted, grounded again. An Eskimo threw himself from the bow and, running with the swell, brought a line to the beach. Directly the cove was alive. The women and children were put ashore, and the crew fell to unlading. There were furs, two recently caught hair-seal with the pelts not yet taken; pieces of ivory, bone, and various treasures and camp belongings dear only to the eyes of an Eskimo, but nothing to show they had visited the *Yakutat*.

When the first excitement of landing abated and he began to attract curious glances, Rollins drew nearer; and with a few native words and many gestures explained the wreck. Instantly a man was despatched to the summit of the eastward promontory. He returned speedily, expressing himself all of the way in shouts and pantomime. The work of discharging the umiak was quickly renewed; and, in a short time, with a small and picked crew, and Rollins in the waist, she crept out between the headlands and the island. A crest broke over her brows, but the tight skin covering shed water like the back of a huge sea-bird.

The distance to the ship was much greater from the cove than from the glacier, but the brown sail filled gently, and with the aid of paddles the craft made her course with incredible swiftness, and was brought alongside.

The Eskimos swarmed aboard. Several lusty young fellows threw off parkas and muk-luks, and plunged down the partly submerged companionway. They returned laden with tinned stores from the pantry. They went again and again. They collected blankets, canvas, strips of lumber, and, under the miner's direction, other material whose uses they had not yet learned. At any moment, before a second trip could be made, the wreck might slide from the rock and directly founder; for this reason the umiak was freighted perilously low.

But at the last Robbins, wishing to secure some of the ship's charts and instruments, mounted the stairs to the bridge. Suddenly he stopped. He stood silent, rocking a little on his feet like a pillar when the earth trembles.

Katherine was there. Katherine, wrapped in her steamer-rug, in a sunny corner of the house, asleep.

He did not try to rouse her, but when he lifted her in his arms she opened her eyes briefly, and, seeing him, settled against his shoulder with a restful sigh. But when the Eskimos had cleared room for her amidships, and Rollins had taken his place beside her, and the umiak tacked gently out, quartering to the swells, she looked at him again.

"I'm so tired," she said; "so—sleepy —I can hardly—think."

"Don't try," he answered. "Don't try; you are all right."

Then after a while she said: "I knew you understood the ice and would be safe. And you found these Eskimos. You came—for me?"

That he could not answer directly. He turned his face away, gritting his teeth, and looked back at the wreck. What agony of suspense had she not suffered before this numbing exhaustion relieved her!

"I understand, Katherine," he said at last, gathering his voice between the words; "I understand. You thought it was your duty to stay with me aboard that ship. It was the Pilgrim spirit cropping out again. I never counted on it—half-enough. You must have concealed yourself somewhere until the boats were gone. But I was sure you went in that starboard boat. Why, I saw the lieutenant waiting to help you. He offered his hand."

"I couldn't endure—the lieutenant," she said.

"You couldn't endure——?" He gave her a quick, searching look.

"And I never cared for a moment about that money, Mark. Listen. It was my investment and risk. I believed in the Sunset Mine. It made a fine showing at first, and I was glad to put my capital with yours. I was proud of all that machinery and sluicing; and I watched the tunnel grow. It was like reaching an arm down under the tundra and feeling for the gold. And I said so—that day—to the lieutenant."

She sat erect, fully awake at last, with her breast heaving in short breaths, and the color burning in her cheeks two crimson spots.

"You did," he said gently; "you did—did you? Well that was mighty fine of you. But why didn't you tell me so?"

"Because you arranged it all, at once, without a question. You know—you gave me no alternative."

"That's so," he admitted slowly, and contracted his brows. "That's so. But I thought I was making it easier for you."

"And I thought"—she shook her head, smiling a little—"I thought differently—until that moment in the cabin after the ship struck. Then I knew. And perhaps I could have stayed through duty, Mark, but just then, when the time came, I wasn't so much afraid of anything else as—going in that starboard boat—*without you.*"

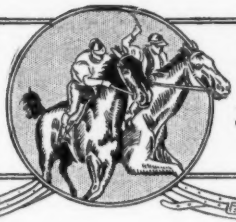
Later when the umiak had made the island, and swung around into the pass between the towering headlands, and the cove opened toward the ravine, Rollins said: "But I'm going to pay back that money, Katherine; I'm going to do it now. Yes, I mean that. It's right here in this gorge, I'll show you, clean, placer gold."

Her glance met his and a quick understanding leaped in her face. She leaned forward, eager, expectant, scanning the ravine, the shore. Then she looked at him again and a soft light shone in her eyes.

"It's a lovely place for the new camp," she said.



AT EVENS



By Martha McCulloch Williams

UNLESS the recording angel has a sense of humor, also a pretty taste for melodrama, he must find the most part of human occasions dreadfully tedious to set down. Especially racing occasions, which are high-keyed both as to tragedy and comedy, in parts; in parts, also, of the most sordid commonplace. The surface contrast, infinite as is its variety, sinks out of sight compared to the interplay of human motive and human passion.

Henleigh was proving the fact—Henleigh, outwardly the moral and pattern of impassive correctness. He stood a little back from the railing of the clubhouse lawn, scowling the least bit, and watching intently the preliminary of a candidate for the Shotover. As he watched the scowl deepened a bit—still nobody could have guessed that a little later the animal was to win or lose for him a fortune and more.

To understand that you must know Henleigh's estate and condition. Born a gentleman, bred to expectations, he had got a facer where he looked for the full fruition of long hope. Although he had known himself only collaterally in line for his cousin Bartram's big fortune, being also the old man's godson, he had felt fairly certain of getting it; or at least the lion's share of it. Judge, then, his state of mind when the fortune was left equally to him and Patricia Gordon—upon condition of marrying each other.

Patricia had Henleigh blood without having the name. She was, indeed, more nearly related to the testator than his namesake. The old man had loved his name and blood exceedingly; hence this plan to perpetuate both. His heirs frankly hated each other, but what could they do? If either refused to accept the condition the other took all the fortune—if both were contumacious it passed to various charities for Henleigh foundations. Even divorce would not help, since the old man had craftily provided that such action within ten years of marriage should work forfeiture of his estate. And this hedged about with the extremest legal safeguards, thereby showing that old Bartram had not meant to be thwarted. The younger Bartram had not hated him for it—not for a while, at least. He had left the hating to Patricia—she was so thin and dark and up-headed, the sentiment seemed naturally to belong to her.

Old Bartram had given the pair two years of grace. Early in the last of them Henleigh had gone South for the spectacle of Mardi Gras. He had come back wholly changed—why, Patricia did not know. Yet really she ought to have known—she herself had been, for three years, at least, madly in love—with an impossible person, of course. Patricia never yet had done the thing she should. She had met him unconventionally—Archy Calder rode early as she did, and they had come together in the park. He was a third-class, and not wholly reputable, stable-owner; but Patricia would have married him out of hand had there not been a wife in her way.

The Calders had been separated for some time. Mrs. Calder was ready enough to divorce her husband, but what with the law's delay and the general contrariety of things, before Archy was free, there came the complication

of old Bartram's will. Patricia might have been mad enough to sacrifice her inheritance, but Calder would not have it so.

"You wait! A heap of things can happen in two years," he had said.

The counsel was not wholly mercenary, neither disinterested. After a sort he was fond of Patricia—there was fascination for him in her unlikeness to the pink-and-white beauties of whom he had had a surfeit. Yet he hated Henleigh much too cordially to think of thus giving him a fortune in fee. Moreover, he counted upon an innate fastidiousness in the man he hated. After Patricia had openly shown her infatuation for Calder to all Henleigh's world, what so likely as that Henleigh should give up the money in sheer disgust?

Shrewd reckoning, but it failed to take account of two things—Henleigh's capacity for endurance and Margaret McLeod. The endurance had been strained almost to the breaking-point when Henleigh ran off South. He came back beseeching Patricia to agree to an immediate marriage.

"It's all a wretched tangle, Pat," he had said. "But we only make it worse by delay. Let's have the thing over—once it is done, we needn't see any more of each other than we choose. I think I'd rather live abroad—afterward; we can manage so as to keep the ocean betwixt us most of the time. Even if the money don't bring us happiness, we shall be less wretched with it than without it. Neither of us could earn salt to our porridge if it came to the pinch; besides, we both love luxury."

"I love Archy Calder—more even than I hate you," Patricia had flung back at him. "You have known that all along; yet you would trust me with your name, your honor, rather than do a man's part. A real man would long ago have found a way around this nightmare will. Oh, I know we couldn't contest it, with all those doctors certifying that Cousin Bartram knew what he was doing, and those grasping charities watching like hawks. Why didn't you refuse and trust me? You know I should not have let you suffer."

Henleigh had smiled, a slow, strained smile. "We will not talk of that," he had said. "I might ask why didn't you trust me? Because, in the end, you will marry me, hear this! My name and honor will be safe with you. You know if—any man—compromised you I should certainly kill him."

"Unless he first killed you, and left me everything. Wouldn't that be a happy ending?" Patricia had said with her most reckless laugh.

Henleigh had left her, heart-sick, his mind in a whirl. He had not seen her again until three days back.

She had written him:

> Come! I have found a way out—if you dare to take it.

She had met him the picture of piteous pleading, all her scorn quenched in tears. The plan she had unfolded to him seemed so little short of madness he had at first refused even to listen to it. It was simplicity itself—neither more nor less than that they should risk the Henleigh fortune, win or lose, upon Glimmer, Calder's entry for the Shotover.

"Why, we had better toss up or draw lots, if we leave it thus to chance," Henleigh had protested.

But Patricia had answered eagerly: "It's not chance, but fate. You know how I love horses; how they in turn love me. Archy says I've been a mascot for his stable. Do you know why? It's because I *will*, and *will*, that he shall win. Glimmer has a chance to win—only a chance, no more. But I'm willing to risk everything on it. Say that you agree! If he wins I shall be free and rich and happy. If he loses the luck will be yours. If we drew lots there would be nothing but blind chance; this way I can send my soul to help. And it is quite fair—even you can't deny that."

"No—it is not fair—Glimmer will be nowhere at the finish. You forget the field he meets; the very pick of the timber-toppers. All with gentlemen riders. What gentleman will ride for Glimmer's stable?" Henleigh had answered.

And Patricia had flung back at him, her head high, her eyes blazing: "One equal to the best. No—I won't tell his name yet—you don't know it—but nobody can discredit him."

The talk had gone on and on. In the end Henleigh had given way. Not without twinges of conscience. Patricia must be mad; he had tried to save her from her madness, but not wholeheartedly. The temptation had been too great; he could not turn away from this almost certain chance of freedom and riches. Of course he would take care of her—even if it did mean also taking care of Calder. But a moderate maintenance was one thing, and half the Henleigh millions quite another. Henleigh was on such terms with the wise men of the turf—also the near-wise men—he was sure that when the Shotover candidates came out Glimmer would be held at odds of ten to one.

This before he watched the preliminary. Something in the horse's motion disquieted him. It was Glimmer's first time out that season—Glimmer who, standing still, was the ungainliest brute on four hoofs. The four hoofs were but figurative. Literally, Glimmer most commonly stood still on three, as though favoring a limb unsound. Long-waisted, long and thin of neck, low-headed and sleepy-looking, his coarse ears proclaimed the cart-horse cross ten generations back in his pedigree. Possibly it was the cart-horse strain that gave also the massy quarters full of lifting power; but it was thoroughbred blood that spoke in flat, clean legs, in whip-cord tendons and elastic muscles, no less than in mighty reaching forearms and perfect withers. His walk was a slouch; at the trot he stumbled over himself; but set him cantering, and let him go on to a dead, full run, and he was transformed. He ran low, not lifting even his head; but today as he came down the stretch, the course, a dun-crinkled ribbon stretched athwart shaven emerald-velvet turf, seemed to fly back behind him.

It was mid-May and mid-afternoon, with soft May airs coming full in the face. Airs as tricksy as they were soft; they wrapped something cloudy-white yet diaphanous about Henleigh's glass, obscuring his vision when he was most intent on seeing. As he lowered the glass he found it still entangled—meshes of the cobweb film had caught upon tiny projections of the frame. There was nothing for it but to turn toward its involuntary captor. As he turned he started violently; he was facing the girl that, until three days back, he had hoped he might never see again.

"Why, how funny! You ought to be at the other end of the world—you know you told me you were going there on your bridal trip," the girl said, neither flushing nor trembling as she freed her veil. She even laughed a gay little laugh as she stuck her gloved finger through the inevitable rent, saying: "That's done for. I'm so glad. I do hate these rubbishy long things. But Molly said, and the major agreed with her, I must wear it—it was so very swell. I forgot—you don't know about Molly, my cousin that married Major Allibone. They truly have been to the other end of the world. Thank goodness he's ordered home now, and stationed East. On the way they stopped and picked me up."

"Don't say that," Henleigh entreated. "Let me keep on believing you are here because I wanted you so desperately."

The girl opened her eyes very wide and drew a quick breath. "What are you doing all by yourself? I think you need a keeper—your lawful keeper," she said.

Henleigh smiled at her. "I have no lawful keeper—yet," he said. "Maybe I never shall have—unless you——"

He broke off there. After all, his freedom was not yet quite absolute. But in a little while—such a very little while—he would tell Margaret the whole story, and find heaven in the joy of her eyes. He was sure she loved him; that was why he had fled from her. Had he stayed even another day he would never have left her.

He drew her hand lightly upon his arm, saying joyously: "But we won't talk of things personal. Let me take you to your cousin."

"I know it, but I don't want to go back. Molly is with the army set; they patronize one so one feels quite crushed. All of them are going into the paddock; not to see the horses, but the other women's clothes. Yet the army ladies think they know all about horses. And they are going to bet, if they get the right tips. I think that is not nice. But Mrs. Captain Somebody—I forget her name—seems to be mighty proud of having won a whole lot. She told Molly she would have to do it, too; it was the only way to get along, with salaries so ridiculously low. What do you think? Do real ladies bet, and bet high?"

"Some of them. As to what I think it all depends," Henleigh said, possessing himself of her parasol and tilting it so as to shield her face from the eyes that began to stare at her. "We also will go into the paddock—that is, if you like. After you have presented me to Molly, I can let myself take care of you with a clear conscience. It will be easy enough to lose ourselves after the call to post."

"I lost myself easily enough before it," Margaret said, dimpling and flushing frankly. "Of course I didn't expect to see you—after what you said—but I was bound to find out whether it was you or your ghost that stood there looking so glum."

"I am glad you were even curious," Henleigh said, not daring to look at her, but audaciously pressing the hand upon his arm. Very shortly they were in the thick of the army set, which was high-pitched and in a high color-key; the women elaborately chic, the men trying hard to look supremely indifferent and more supremely wise. Molly and the major did not fit among them; they were both so humanly real. Besides, Molly's frock was six months out of style; and all the major knew of the racing game were the points of a horse; also that the best horse did not always win.

Notwithstanding, or possibly because of, his ignorance he was keenly interested in the Shotover candidates.

"There's the winner," he said emphatically, as Greylock came through the gate, his head high, his dun coat mirrorlike in brilliance, his step elastic, as though he trod on air.

Small wonder that the majority agreed with the major. The big, long-striding fellow, five years old, but as sound as the day he was foaled, ruled easily at evens; with Misette, the next choice, going at fours. Yet she was a factor not to be despised—the same age as Greylock, and in their days over the flat more than once his conqueror. But, as the year before she had gone seriously amiss, the talent was a bit shy of her, although in looks and work she had fully come back to herself.

Half a hand lower than Greylock, she was half a shade handsomer—a deep copper-red in coat, with one white hind foot, a fine white star, and floss-silk flaxen mane and tail. Both were braided and ribboned until she looked like a country beauty bound on a fairing. The ribbons were blue and crimson, her stable colors. Since the Shotover, although a racing fixture, was open only to gentlemen riders, there would be only pink coats in saddle for it.

Greylock's colors, green and white, fluttered raggedly from his head-stall and the breast of Pelton, his rider, who was reckoned so near a wizard cross-country his following held the combination invincible. Gaygold, a gallant cripple, given to limping through the first mile, and coming to life in the second, had Bartley up, a fair enough rider, but not to be named beside Pelton, or even Rixey, Misette's pilot. A glossy brown, big and gauntish, Gaygold flaunted at his saddle-bow chrysanthemum bunches of cream and scarlet. The Duke, a smashing bay four-year-old, only lately set to going over the sticks, had his black mane faintly flecked with blue and buff, and a big splash of color cockade-wise on the hat of his rider, Hillman, who made up in conceit more than all he lacked in riding quality.

There were but five to go. Glimmer came in last of all. Calder had tried hard to have him go straight from the

stable to the start, but the powers were obdurate. The crowd must see, not only the horse, but the rider, Sanchez, of whom Calder said no more than that he came from the far Southwest, was Spanish, and a gentleman; wholly untainted with professionalism and its tricks. He backed up the saying with credentials nobody could question. Naturally there was keen curiosity when the big black lumbered in, somber, almost sinister, despite the rider's red coat and the knots of flame-red on reins and whip-stock.

An odd figure this rider—not overtall, and spare-limbed, but curiously puffy and pouter-pigeon-y as to trunk. Dark-faced also—so dark there were murmurs all about of "Mexican" and "cowboy"; with purple-black hair falling to his shoulders from beneath a slouch-hat; deep-set, very black eyes, and small, lean hands, brown and sinewy.

Henleigh looked at him narrowly a moment, but from afar; Calder was at the other end of the paddock. Usually he fended off the thronging curious. To-day he seemed rather to welcome their clustering. He had given himself barely time to make ready—indeed, he was tightening a girth when there came the call to post.

Before Henleigh got a closer look the horses were away. It did not reassure him to have the major say—the major to whom he had lent his glass—after a long look at Sanchez:

"I lay odds there goes the best rider. Pity he hasn't got the best horse under him."

Henleigh shivered; then laughed at himself. What could go wrong after the omen of Margaret's presence? Deftly he managed to lose the others; all save the faithful and guileless major, who yet knew enough to stand on Margaret's other hand, protecting her from the crush, but far enough away not to overhear low speech.

The major was an excellent sort, Henleigh decided. He was quite welcome to the glass—at least, until the race was on. He did not care to talk; it was enough to feel through and through Margaret's delicious nearness. Since he came to man's estate he had fancied, rather warmly, a dozen beautiful women, but Margaret was his first love—he was sure she would be also his last. To think he had dreamed of living without her! It was impossible. They were made for each other; he would claim and keep her, come what might.

Yet his hand shook a bit; his knees trembled when at the cry of "Off!" he took the glass the major held out to him. The major, watching him for a second, saw that he got very white. Compassionately he turned his eyes courseward, where there was, indeed, a sight to see.

The course was a winding one; a distorted figure eight, running between flags over turf in and out the regular track. There were hurdles, some naked, some masked or backed with brushwood; a hedge and ditch, a gate or two; and out in fair sight of the stand an extra hazardous water-jump. Since the course was but three miles in circuit, and the Shotover distance four, the start had to be well up course, thus sending the racers twice past the stand.

They came down to it full swing, all five topping the first easy hurdle as though they disdained it, Greylock and Misette not even checking stride for it. They ran side by side, with the Duke at their saddle-skirts; Glimmer next, and Gaygold nodding along last. At the second jump, a stiffer one, the Duke ran up abreast of the leaders. Gaygold went over it safe, but Glimmer tipped heels in the brush behind it, and faltered so palpably in recovery the rest left him yards behind.

"The dark man ain't comin' with the bundle—not this time—eh, Henleigh?" an irrepressible behind said, leaning across Henleigh's shoulder.

Henleigh frowned but nodded. "He does seem to be out of it," he said, his color coming back with a rush.

The major shook his head energetically; he could not take his eyes from the course. They were used to sweeping distances; thus naked they saw

almost as clearly as those of city men through glasses.

"The dark man ain't beaten yet—not by several furlongs," he said. "Mexican or what not, that fellow can ride rings round the rest of them. He's *letting* them go on. Don't you see what they are coming to? A bullfinch, or first cousin to it. I tell you a horse must have breath in him to get over it. Ah, ha, I thought so!" as the Duke, instead of rising at the bullfinch, obstinately refused it until the second trial.

Greylock and Misette had swept over it like birds. Gaygold had broken through the upper branches, and by good hap found his feet on the other side. Glimmer took it soaring, so lightly, so supplely, there came a roaring: "Well done!" But he did not go up to the flying leaders; instead, he lay well back, just fairly in front of Gaygold, who was loosening up, and had quit nodding in his stride.

Past the cross of the figure eight, on around the turn, going well over everything, Greylock and Misette still led. But the pace was telling; they were lathery from counter to tail. So was Gaygold, now right at their heels. Glimmer, close behind, had foam only at the bit. Evidently he was fretting to go out and make a runaway of it—supposing that he could.

Henleigh watching, all his soul in his eyes, marveled that the rider could hold him; there must be the strength of steel in the fingers inside those double wraps. The Duke was out of the running—unless by some miracle all the rest fell down.

Still there was the water-jump. It came in the last leg of the figure eight. Until it was safely negotiated the event was uncertain.

The hedge and ditch came beyond it about midway the rise of the course. But whatever took the water-jump should have no trouble at this other obstacle, unless it had a rider bent on throwing the race. With these riders that was more than impossible.

Out on the flagged course Pelton smiled superiorly at the thought. He was sure of winning. He had never ridden in better form, nor backed a better horse than Greylock was showing himself. True, he had had to make the pace; it was a bit hotter than strict prudence counseled, but Greylock had plenty left. He held Misette safe—she was tiring rapidly. If Gaygold should challenge in the run home, Greylock would be ready for him.

Pelton took no account of Glimmer; the black horse had appeared to him from the first an impertinence. But when he came to take the water-jump, Misette had fallen back, beaten. In place of her there loomed a big black bulk, that rose and leaped and landed—a good yard in front of Greylock.

There was no cheering—the moment was too tense. Half-stunned, almost breathless, myriad eyes saw the lumbering black bulk, the splendid dun racer, now himself black with sweat, take stride for stride, running like a team, stretching, straining, devouring distance with the sweep and speed of flame; saw them come at last to the forbidding hedge, rise at it together, and thrust themselves across. For one heart-breaking half-second the vision of them blurred and wavered. Something had struck the topmost branches—was it one or both?

"Greylock! He's down—down and out!" came in a groaning chant. But almost instantly the groan changed to a cheer; for there was Greylock up and running—behind Glimmer, to be sure, but with a mile to catch him in. He would do it—never fear—he must. With their hearts, their strength, his partizans entreated him to come on and win for them. As though answering them he came—his stride lengthening, quickening, until again he ran in front.

"Pelton! Pelton! Greylock! Greylock! *Greylock!*" the crowd roared, manly bass undervoiced by woman's treble shrilling.

Margaret was sobbing softly. "The poor black horse! If he wins they will hate him," she said low to Henleigh.

Henleigh shuddered again. "Pray that he loses. You don't know—you can't——" he said brokenly.

Then he stopped short. All about there was stunned silence. Greylock, in the stretch, rising to the next last hurdle, had dropped never to rise again—his game heart literally broken in that supreme effort. Glimmer, running like a whirlwind, came on and on, went over the bars, under the finish-line, three lengths clear of Gaygold, with the Duke distanced, and Misette a bad last.

Henleigh saw the rider's face as the pair swept the finish-line, and shut his eyes, and clenched his teeth on a groan. In spite of the brown stain, the disfiguring disguise, he knew Sanchez for Patricia, a rider skilled and fearless, with almost eerie power over horses—Patricia who had dared thus to work out her salvation. Her exploit thrilled him, in spite of what it had cost him.

He turned and looked at Margaret. After all, need he renounce her? He had a man's thews and sinews, a man's chance. He felt as though he could move the world if she would but wait for him to do it.

Jangling cries drew his gaze again to the course. Glimmer was coming back to the scales, a mad horse. Leaping, plunging, buck-jumping, savaging whatever came in his way, at last he reared, plunged again, fell backward, and rolled on his rider, whose hands even in death still clutched the reins.

It was Henleigh who made to lift her, thrusting aside Calder, a white-faced and shaking Calder, abject in terror.

"Be keerful—for God's sake," he whispered hoarsely to Henleigh. "You—you'll want things kept quiet, same as me."

Henleigh asked no explanation—there was no need. As he wrenched loose the slim fingers he got a hard, tingling shock. Glimmer had scrambled up, and stood panting and dull-eyed, but snorting with rage and fear.

The stewards came hurrying to them.

Calder shrank nervously from them, and said with chattering teeth: "Make it how you please, gentlemen; only—don't give me the purse. It's blood-money. I—I can't touch it. I feel enough like a murderer as it is."

They stared at him, and might have protested but for what they read in Henleigh's eyes.

Henleigh's lips said only: "Help us away, please—as quickly as possible. Mr. Calder is too upset to know just what he is saying. I am acting with him because he is—a friend of the family."

"I begged and begged her not to do it; but you know how set in her ways she was," Calder said dully to Henleigh a few hours later. Patricia's secret was safe—they had managed, somehow, to take away the telltale battery unseen of other eyes. "She tried it on two or three times—riding in the dark, up-country, with me timing her," Calder went on. "It was her own notion. Glimmer ran like a house afire. He's always had the speed and action; trouble was getting it out of him. She gave him touches—just enough to sting him all along. Then at the last she got rattled, and couldn't stop—it must 'a' been that way—and the full strength set him wild."

"Whatever she did she has paid the price. God give her rest!" Henleigh said: "You knew how it was? About the fortune, I mean?"

Calder nodded, then burst out: "Damn the fortune! You won't believe it, but now I've lost her, I'd freely give all of it, supposing I had it, to have her back for just a year."

"She won it—whether fairly or unfairly does not matter," Henleigh said. "She gave her life for it so she might give it to you. The law makes it mine, but she shall not be wholly thwarted. You shall have her share of it upon your promise to leave the country and stay away as long as you live."

Calder stared at Henleigh incredulously. "You don't mean that—you can't. Why, I'd never dare to claim a cent."

Henleigh smiled. "I do mean it. It's less than I owe you," he said. "Though the wager was at evens, and I save my stake because the race was not run true, you lose something more."

"You mean—Patricia," Calder said, turning away with a dry sob.



PRIDE of CRAFT

By Joseph C. Lincoln

IN Orham, where the babies are said to be born with fins and scales, the name of being the best skipper of small craft alongshore means something. Therefore, Ed Emory was proud of his reputation. He was also proud of his sloop, the *Minnie L.*, for to him she was the reward of seasons of toil and hardship, work and weariness, cold and wet, self-sacrifice and rigid economy. If his young wife had cared for the reputation and the boat as he did, then Ed Emory would have been a happy man.

Just now, as he stood on the wharf, with one foot on the stringpiece, and looked at the dull sky and steel-colored water, he was not altogether happy. Mrs. Emory, standing beside him, had been talking.

"Wind's cantin' round to the sou'-west, and it's goin' to blow afore night," observed Ed. "'Tain't a fit day for a woman to be out on the rips, and I'll tell 'em so if they come."

His wife shrugged her plump shoulders and stamped her pretty foot impatiently. "Of course you will!" she exclaimed. "That's just like you. You'll tell 'em, and they'll think you're afraid, and get somebody else. You take 'em!"

"But, Minnie, it ain't fit, I tell you. 'Twill be mighty rugged on the shoals, and she'll git wet, and——"

"Let her get wet. I guess likely she's got clothes enough to change when she gets home. Anyhow, her husband can buy her more. If she was like me, with only one decent dress to her name, why——"

"I know, Minnie, but——"

"Yes, and *I* know. You're afraid you'll carry away somethin' or scratch up that precious boat of yours. If you thought as much of me as you do of that boat, maybe I could be somebody at church Sundays, instead of prayin' for rain, or some other excuse to stay at home. I'm sick of livin' like a pauper, but you don't care. It's nothin' but boat, boat, boat with you!"

Her husband took off his cap and rubbed his forehead with a big red hand. Then he sighed, and looked down at the stubby little craft made fast to the lowest step of the landing. Not much of a boat, as boats go, was the *Minnie L.;* not even beautiful to look at was she, being painted a plain white and green, and lacking the gilt stripes and ornamental brass work of some of the pretentious "party-boats" in Orham harbor. But the paint was spotlessly clean, the sails were furled with careful accuracy, and the halyards and spare ropes were coiled in neat patterns on her decks and in the cockpit. She was somebody's darling, and showed it.

"Well," continued Mrs. Emory sharply, "what are you going to do? I should think you could see what this means to us. Almena Berry, told me only yesterday—her husband works on the Talford place—that young Mr. Talford was havin' a new yacht built

for next year, and was huntin' a sailin'-master. And Almena said you'd been recommended to him. You might get fifteen hundred dollars wages, and I could live in the city, and go to the theater and be half-way respectable. And here's your first chance to show him what you are. Oh, why ain't you more ambitious? Stand in with him, that's what you ought to do; stand in with him! Ss-h-h! here they come."

From the hill behind the fish-house sounded the chuff of a gasoline motor, involuntary but pompous, like the cough of a corpulent but intensely aristocratic old gentleman.

"Squealer" Wixon's plebeian pullets fled to the shelter of the beach-plum bushes. Then the Talford auto, gorgeous and glittering, rolled goutily down the hill and out upon the wharf. The Talford chauffeur brought it to a standstill, and sprang from his seat to open the door of the tonneau. From this door stepped forth the heir to the Talford millions, followed by the newly acquired Talford, the bride and beauty, on her first visit to Orham. The pair walked toward the Emorys, while the chauffeur, as rear-guard, bore the hamper containing the Talford lunch.

"Katherine," condescended Mr. Colton Talford—"Colty," so-called by his friends among the irreverent rich—"I presume this is the—er—pilot. Er—my man, is this our boat?"

He pointed a warmly gloved finger at the *Minnie L.* Ed Emory looked at the boat, then at Mr. Talford, and in his eyes was doubt. Mrs. Emory looked at the bride and the bride's sea-going costume, and in her eyes was envy.

"Why, yes, Mr. Talford," drawled Ed. "That's the boat you was goin' out in. But I dunno's I ought to take you to-day, 'specially with a lady along. Looks dirty to me."

Mrs. Talford stepped to the string-piece and deigned to inspect the *Minnie L.*

"Colton," she said haughtily, "she's not dirty at all. She seems to me remarkably clean, as clean as the deck of the *Cedric.*"

"I don't mean the boat, ma'am," explained Ed. "I mean the weather. A September sou'wester means rugged water on the shoals, and that's where we got to head for if we want to land ary pollock."

Colty Talford laughed. "My dear man," he said, "we're not greenhorns. You can't frighten us. I have—er—yachted for years, and Mrs. Talford has crossed the pond several times. James"—turning to the chauffeur—"you may put the hamper on board."

But Emory still hesitated. "'Tain't the roughness altogether," he began. "If I was you, Mr. Talford, I'd put it off for another day. You see——"

"Yes, I see. Well, if you're afraid, why, there are other skippers, I presume."

"I ain't afraid for myself, Mr. Talford, but the lady——"

"I am escorting the lady. Come, Katherine."

He held out his hand to the bride. She paused before taking it.

"Colton," she said, "perhaps the man knows best. Don't you think——"

"Don't interfere, Katherine. My summers on the Cape have made me familiar with this class. Look here—er—Emory, or whatever your name is; I believe I was to pay you five dollars for the trip. I'll pay you ten. Now get on board."

The skipper's sunburned face turned redder. He fidgeted with the buttons on his reefing-jacket.

"The price was all right afore," he said; "but I don't——"

He happened to glance at his wife. Her lips were shut tight, and she nodded vigorously. "Of course you'll go, Ed," she snapped.

"Well, all right, Mr. Talford," said Ed. "We'll go if you say so."

Colty laughed again. "You see?" he said, turning to the bride. Mrs. Talford saw, or thought she did. She had "seen" ever since she left school. Her mother, an aspiring widow with a small bank-account, had helped her to see. It was the mother who first saw Colton Talford.

The *Minnie L.*, with one reef in her mainsail, slid easily away from the

wharf and across the harbor. She rounded the beach, where the salt cod lay whitening on the flakes, and came out into the bay. Then she stood away for the long beat to Setuckit Point. The wind blew fresh, and the spray flew from the sloop's bow.

The tide being high, they crossed the Clam Flat instead of going around it. Emory looked down at the seaweed on the bottom.

"This ere's a bad place sometimes," he observed, "but I thought I could chance it."

"Chance it!" echoed Talford, who was smoking a blooded cigar. "I should think you could. Why, there isn't a breaker in sight. For a man who is called a sailor, you're the most —humph!—careful chap I ever saw. I wish you had seen my Captain Dearborn bring my yacht across the bar off my place in Florida two years ago. That was chancing it, if you like."

The wind freshened as they drew near Setuckit, and Ed took in another reef. At twelve they ate their lunch, the Talfords from a big hamper, and the skipper from his little pail, with the tin cup on top. At one they threw over the pollock lines, with their heavy lead "drails." Emory had determined to try the luck inside the Point first. He didn't like the looks of things outside.

It was slow fishing. Back and forth sailed the *Minnie L.*, the lines dragging astern, but the pollock evidently were not there. Emory hooked one small bass, but that was all. The male passenger was disgusted.

"See, here, Emory," he snorted, "why don't you go out there? That's where we got them last year."

Ed peered under the sail out past the Point. The sky was dull gray, with little shreds of dust-colored clouds scudding across it. On the tide-scoured "rips" great rollers with white crests were chasing each other in a ceaseless game of tag.

"I'd ruther not, Mr. Talford," he said. "Them rips are bad places."

"What are you afraid of? Do you want more money? Is it a matter of dollars and cents, as usual?"

"No, sir; it ain't. But there's a resk, and——"

"Well, what of it? *I* like to take a risk sometimes just for the fun of it. Where's that seamanship I've heard so much about? Haven't you any professional pride?"

The skipper opened his mouth to answer, and then shut it again. He could tell this man a few things. But what was the use? They wouldn't be understood.

"What is that building with the tower on shore there?" asked Mrs. Talford, speaking for the first time in an hour.

"Life-savin' station, ma'am. There's a man in that tower on watch all the time."

"Do you suppose he is watching us?"

"Sartin, ma'am. He's watchin' everything afloat."

"Would the life-boat come to our rescue if we were in trouble?"

"Yes'm; be obliged to. That's what they're paid for."

"Then why don't you go outside?" asked Talford, with a wink at his wife. "You could always signal for help, you know."

Ed's answer was, for him, almost sharp. "Folks down here don't think much of a skipper that has to be helped by life-savers," he said.

Colty roared. "Ho, ho!" he shouted. "Then there is some professional pride, after all. I never should have guessed it."

The fishing, unsuccessful as ever, continued for another ten minutes. Then the millionaire spoke again.

"It's no use, Emory," he said. "I've had enough of this. I paid you a double price to take us to the fishing-grounds. Now you fulfil your contract; do you hear?"

"I'd ruther not, Mr. Talford. I'd a good deal ruther not. If——"

"And I'd *ruther* you would. So had the lady. Am I right, Katherine?"

"I am willing to go," replied the bride coldly. "But if the man is afraid, why——"

"Why, we'll take his wife next time, hey? She seems to have the sand of the family."

Ed thought of his wife and the conversation on the wharf. He closed his teeth with a snap. Next moment the *Minnie L.* had passed from the comparatively still water behind the Point to the foot-hills of those whitecapped ranges outside.

And there the pollock bit. Cæsar! how they bit! As the little sloop, under her double-reefed mainsail, doggedly climbed the great waves and coasted down the slopes, the trailing-lines tightened, and darted this way and that. Colty Talford dropped his cigar and tore his costly gloves into ribbons as he tugged and panted and fought with the fighting fifteen-pounders. The bride forgot to be cold and haughty, and grew almost as excited as her husband. The floor of the cockpit was carpeted with glittering bodies and flapping tails. Only Ed Emory, with the tiller between his knees and his gaze fixed on the sail and sea, was calm.

The wind freshened steadily. The *Minnie L.* prodded the wave-crests with her stubby nose, and the spray shot from bow to stern, soaking the fishers and the skipper. But the Talfords were too preoccupied to notice the wet, and to Emory it was everyday occurrence. Along the western sky-line a gray mountain of fog-bank was piling up, and in the tower of the life-saving station the watcher peered through his glass at the sloop.

And then, all at once, the pollock ceased to bite. The drails skipped from wave to wave, and no hungry fish leaped from the eddies to drag them under. Colton Talford came out of his trance.

"Where have they gone?" he asked fretfully.

"Struck in shore nigher, I cal'late," replied Ed. "Over there on that rip, I wouldn't wonder."

He pointed to a spot a quarter of a mile away, where the waves were jumping in foamy lines, while just beyond the water was smoother, but dented with whirlpools and embossed with bubbles.

"Then why don't we go over there?" demanded Talford.

"'Tain't safe at this stage of the tide, and with this wind. Mr. Talford, I'm sorry to spile your fun, but we've got to start for home. The fog's settin' in, and we mustn't stay no longer."

"Oh, thunder! Leave when we've just begun to enjoy ourselves? I'll be hanged if we do anything of the sort!"

"Colton," protested his wife, "perhaps——"

"*Will* you stop interfering, Katherine? Where are you heading for now?"

"Back of the P'int," replied Ed. "Set down, Mr. Talford, and set still, if you please."

Talford hesitated, looked at the skipper's face, and sat down, grumbling. The *Minnie L.* heeled over and fled for the gull-dotted sand-spit in the distance. Emory, stooping, peered forward.

"I'd like to clear that jib in case I need it," he said, a few minutes later. "You can steer, Mr. Talford, can't you?"

"Of course I can."

"Then take the tiller, and keep her jest as she is, will you, while I climb for'ard. Jest as she is, understand."

He resigned the helm to the disdainful hand of his passenger, and scrambled along the rail by the roof of the cabin. The seas had soaked everything forward, and the jib-halyards were badly tangled. The untangling took longer than he anticipated.

Meanwhile Colty, steering with one hand, was jerking his fish-line back and forth with the other. His glances wandered to the foaming rip, where the skipper had said pollock were likely to be found. Slowly he edged the sloop in nearer and nearer.

The halyards and the jib itself were finally cleared, and Emory raised his eyes.

"Hi!" he shouted. "Where are you goin'? Keep her off! Keep her off, quick!"

The answer was a triumphant whoop. "I've got one!" screamed Talford. "A beauty, too! Murder, how he pulls!"

He was endeavoring to hold the tiller by leaning against it, while with both hands he tugged at the line. The tiller

slipped. The *Minnie L.* rose on a giant wave, tobogganed down its slope, and struck. Rose, slid, and struck again with a thump. The bride shrieked and clutched at the rail. Talford rolled on the floor of the cockpit among the fish. Emory, his legs dragging over the side, clawed his way aft.

Thump! Crunch!

This time the blow was terrific. The *Minnie L.* quivered to the top of her mast. The sea poured into the cockpit. She rose, staggering, and the next comber threw her over the bar. She reeled until her reefed sail slapped the wave-tops. She was in deeper water now, but beyond, a little way off, was another line of breakers, worse than those through which she had just passed. And somewhere astern floated the rudder, split, and broken from its fastenings.

Katherine Talford clung to the rail, white and silent. At the time all seemed a dreadful dream, which lasted for centuries. Later she remembered parts of the dream. She remembered hearing her husband, wallowing in the cockpit, scream shrilly again and again. She remembered seeing him rise to his knees to tumble headlong as the sloop lurched and floundered. But the principal figure in the dream was a man who leaped, catlike, about the boat from rope to rope, never losing his footing and never hesitating.

After a year or two this man caught her by the shoulders. He held in his hand the oar that had lain in its cleats along the rail by the cabin. She remembered vaguely that he had just been trying to call her husband's attention to that oar.

"See this?" demanded the man.

She nodded dumbly.

"Notice how I put it over the starn? Hold it there, jest as it is; can you?"

She did not answer. A pair of strong hands, without a tremble in them, clasped hers about the oar-handles.

"Don't let it slip. Heave your heft against it," ordered Emory.

He scrambled forward. His first move had been to cast off the sheet, and now the sloop, her beam at right angles with the hull, was on a more even keel, and moving before the wind down the lane between the lines of breakers. Another moment and the peak-halyard was loosened. The gaff fell, and the slackened sail flapped and cracked.

"Hang on!" roared Ed. "Hang on now!"

He was back at her side pulling at the sheet. The *Minnie L.* heeled more than ever as the mainsail drew inboard. Emory made the rope fast, and, leaping over the sprawling Talford legs, cast off the throat-halyard. The sail sank, a dripping heap of canvas, upon the deck.

"Now, then," ordered Ed, "give me that oar."

At the end of the converging lines of breakers was a narrow opening, a little gate of smooth water, and toward it fled the crippled sloop.

Colton Talford turned an agonized face up toward the skipper. "What shall we do? What *shall* we do?" he gasped.

"Do? Git out of this, o*i* course."

In the inlet abreast the station a boat appeared; a long, narrow boat, with men tugging at her oars. In the high stern stood another man, steering.

Katherine Talford saw the boat, and her lips parted. Ed Emory saw it, and his lips shut tight. Colton Talford saw it, and he screamed again.

"It's the life-boat!" he cried. "They'll save us! Help!"

A faint "Aye, aye!" came over the water. The *Minnie L.* kept on her course. The little gate was just beyond. A minute and the crazy breakers sprang at her from both sides, the froth from her jaws flying over her. And then she slid through and out, and began to climb the great shining waves beyond.

"Why don't you stop?" cried Talford. "Don't you see that boat? Help! Oh, help!"

"Heave to!" hailed the man in the stern of the life-boat. "Heave to, Ed. We'll take you off. Where are you goin'?"

Emory did not answer. He did not even turn his head.

"Why don't you wait for them?" demanded Talford. "Wait, for Heaven's sake, wait! Are you crazy?"

The sloop kept on before the wind. The life-boat was obliged to make détours to avoid the inshore breakers, and so she did not gain. But her crew rowed doggedly on.

"Help!" shouted the millionaire, leaning over the side. "Don't desert us, we're sinking."

"Shut up!" commanded Emory savagely. "You're all right, ain't you?"

"All right! My God! What is it? Why don't you let them save us?"

"Save *you?* I'm goin' to save my boat."

From the life-boat came another hail.

"Heave to, Ed!" called the captain. "Heave to, or we can't catch you. Where are you bound?"

And then Ed Emory answered. Shading his mouth with his hand, he turned and made reply.

"Home," yelled the skipper of the *Minnie L.*

Then followed an exhibition of seamanship that the wise ones of Orham would have appreciated. Out through the maze of shoals and rips limped the sloop, her jib alone set, her cockpit a foot deep in water. And in her stern stood Ed Emory, steering with the oar, guiding her before the wind, now a little this way and now that, between the shallow bars and over the others, dodging breakers or daring them, as necessity demanded.

The life-boat gave up the chase. Setuckit Point grew small in the distance. The millionaire continued to shout, promising large sums to the life-savers one moment, and in the next offering to buy the *Minnie L.* for prices away beyond what she cost when new. Colty's nerve had left him entirely, and all he wished for in the world was solid, dry land under his feet.

Katherine Talford had already undergone some novel experiences that afternoon. There were more to come. The skipper ignored her husband altogether, and turned to her when he needed help. And his were not requests; they were orders. He pointed to the pump by the centerboard, and told her how to work it. Also he told her to pump, and she did so until her hands were blistered. When, at last, they were off the shoals, he gave her the oar, while he hoisted a scant half of the mainsail. Then, when the fog shut them in, he gave her a tin pan and commanded that she beat it till he said "quit."

Being ordered about, without the ceremony of a "please" or "thank you," was a new thing for the bride. But this cool, adequate man with the sunburned face was master of the situation, and as a master she obeyed him. Occasionally, too, she glanced from him to the shivering millionaire in the cockpit.

The *Minnie L.* came about now and went on a new course. Everywhere was fog, like a gray veil tacked in a little circle around the sloop. The waves were smaller now. After a while they heard a low growl, that grew louder as they moved. And then, across the bow, loomed another line of breakers.

"Look!" shrieked Talford, pointing a trembling finger. "Look! Don't you see?"

"Yep," replied Emory shortly. "I see. It's the Clam Flat. I cal'late there's jest about water enough for us to cross it."

And cross it they did, picking the way as if the skipper was feeling the sand under the keel with his fingers. When the last strip of white water had disappeared astern, Ed turned to his female passenger.

"Ma'am," he said, "I s'pose, likely, you thought I was mighty hard not to let them life-savers take us off. Well, I knew that if I hove to so's they could do it, the tide would swing the old gal here"—slapping the sloop's rail—"onto the sand, so's she'd never come clear. I was sartin I could fetch her in, and I couldn't bear to lose her. She means somethin' to me, this boat does. And besides"—rather apologetically—"as I said afore, folks round here don't think much of skippers that have to be helped by life-savers. See, don't you?"

"I see," said the bride earnestly, looking up into his face.

"Infernal jackass!" growled Colty Talford.

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On the wharf at Orham, that evening, a fair-sized crowd was assembled, waiting. Talford, senior, was there, and the bride's mama, both very nervous and anxious. Mrs. Emory was there with a knitted shawl about her head. Also there were numerous salt-seasoned mariners discussing, with appreciative gusto, the news that had been telephoned to the village by the commander of the Setuckit life-saving station.

"I dunno *how* she got into trouble," said Cap'n Ben Taylor assertively; "but I'll bet my wage and share 'twan't none of Emory's doin's. And he'll fetch her in all right, you see. Sailed right off, and left Knowles and his crew to row back to the P'int again. Wa'n't that Ed all over? Ho, ho! I'd like to have seen it!"

Then some one on the end of the wharf shouted: "Here she comes!" and, with a triumphant "I told you so!" Cap'n Taylor ran to welcome the voyagers.

Through the fog and growing darkness came the *Minnie L.*, draggled and rudderless, but safe, and right side up. Her skipper ran her alongside the landing, dropped her sails, and made her fast. The Talfords landed, and were surrounded by congratulating relatives.

To the crowd on the wharf Emory told his story briefly. The unanimous opinion of the tars was that it was a great performance. Colton Talford, importance and condescension restored, came forward.

"Er—you Emory," he said; "I think you know my opinion of your behavior to-day. Why!" His indignation overcame him. "I offered the idiot five hundred dollars for that tub of his, and he wouldn't take it! It's only luck that he didn't drown us. See, here, you! I oughtn't to pay a cent, but I'm willing to make good the damage to your craft. As for employing you as sailing-master for my yacht, which I intended, that's out of the question. I'm through with you. Now what's the figure?"

"Ten dollars," said Emory stolidly.

The bride stepped forward with her hand extended.

"Captain Emory," she began, "I want to——"

"Don't be a fool, Katherine!" interrupted her husband. "You come with me."

"Ed," said Cap'n Taylor, "there ain't another skipper in these waters could have done it."

With the praises ringing in his ears, Ed turned to his wife. Then he saw the look in her eyes.

"Oh!" she whispered fiercely. "You've spoiled our only chance to be anybody in this world! Why didn't I marry a *man?"*

And, as it happened, Katherine Talford, beside her mother on the seat of the glittering auto, was thinking that very thing.

SOMETIMES

ACROSS the fields of long ago
He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad with face aglow—
The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully,
Once he has crept within—
I wonder he still hopes to see
The man I might have been!

THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

"Why don't you wait for them?" demanded Talford. "Wait, for Heaven's sake, wait! Are you crazy?"

The sloop kept on before the wind. The life-boat was obliged to make détours to avoid the inshore breakers, and so she did not gain. But her crew rowed doggedly on.

"Help!" shouted the millionaire, leaning over the side. "Don't desert us, we're sinking."

"Shut up!" commanded Emory savagely. "You're all right, ain't you?"

"All right! My God! What is it? Why don't you let them save us?"

"Save *you?* I'm goin' to save my boat."

From the life-boat came another hail.

"Heave to, Ed!" called the captain. "Heave to, or we can't catch you. Where are you bound?"

And then Ed Emory answered. Shading his mouth with his hand, he turned and made reply.

"Home," yelled the skipper of the *Minnie L.*

Then followed an exhibition of seamanship that the wise ones of Orham would have appreciated. Out through the maze of shoals and rips limped the sloop, her jib alone set, her cockpit a foot deep in water. And in her stern stood Ed Emory, steering with the oar, guiding her before the wind, now a little this way and now that, between the shallow bars and over the others, dodging breakers or daring them, as necessity demanded.

The life-boat gave up the chase. Setuckit Point grew small in the distance. The millionaire continued to shout, promising large sums to the life-savers one moment, and in the next offering to buy the *Minnie L.* for prices away beyond what she cost when new. Colty's nerve had left him entirely, and all he wished for in the world was solid, dry land under his feet.

Katherine Talford had already undergone some novel experiences that afternoon. There were more to come. The skipper ignored her husband altogether, and turned to her when he needed help. And his were not requests; they were orders. He pointed to the pump by the centerboard, and told her how to work it. Also he told her to pump, and she did so until her hands were blistered. When, at last, they were off the shoals, he gave her the oar, while he hoisted a scant half of the mainsail. Then, when the fog shut them in, he gave her a tin pan and commanded that she beat it till he said "quit."

Being ordered about, without the ceremony of a "please" or "thank you," was a new thing for the bride. But this cool, adequate man with the sunburned face was master of the situation, and as a master she obeyed him. Occasionally, too, she glanced from him to the shivering millionaire in the cockpit.

The *Minnie L.* came about now and went on a new course. Everywhere was fog, like a gray veil tacked in a little circle around the sloop. The waves were smaller now. After a while they heard a low growl, that grew louder as they moved. And then, across the bow, loomed another line of breakers.

"Look!" shrieked Talford, pointing a trembling finger. "Look! Don't you see?"

"Yep," replied Emory shortly. "I see. It's the Clam Flat. I cal'late there's jest about water enough for us to cross it."

And cross it they did, picking the way as if the skipper was feeling the sand under the keel with his fingers. When the last strip of white water had disappeared astern, Ed turned to his female passenger.

"Ma'am," he said, "I s'pose, likely, you thought I was mighty hard not to let them life-savers take us off. Well, I knew that if I hove to so's they could do it, the tide would swing the old gal here"—slapping the sloop's rail—"onto the sand, so's she'd never come clear. I was sartin I could fetch her in, and I couldn't bear to lose her. She means somethin' to me, this boat does. And besides"—rather apologetically—"as I said afore, folks round here don't think much of skippers that have to be helped by life-savers. See, don't you?"

"I see," said the bride earnestly, looking up into his face.

"Infernal jackass!" growled Colty Talford.

•

On the wharf at Orham, that evening, a fair-sized crowd was assembled, waiting. Talford, senior, was there, and the bride's mama, both very nervous and anxious. Mrs. Emory was there with a knitted shawl about her head. Also there were numerous salt-seasoned mariners discussing, with appreciative gusto, the news that had been telephoned to the village by the commander of the Setuckit life-saving station.

"I dunno *how* she got into trouble," said Cap'n Ben Taylor assertively; "but I'll bet my wage and share 'twan't none of Emory's doin's. And he'll fetch her in all right, you see. Sailed right off, and left Knowles and his crew to row back to the P'int again. Wa'n't that Ed all over? Ho, ho! I'd like to have seen it!"

Then some one on the end of the wharf shouted: "Here she comes!" and, with a triumphant "I told you so!" Cap'n Taylor ran to welcome the voyagers.

Through the fog and growing darkness came the *Minnie L.*, draggled and rudderless, but safe, and right side up. Her skipper ran her alongside the landing, dropped her sails, and made her fast. The Talfords landed, and were surrounded by congratulating relatives.

To the crowd on the wharf Emory told his story briefly. The unanimous opinion of the tars was that it was a great performance. Colton Talford, importance and condescension restored, came forward.

"Er—you Emory," he said; "I think you know my opinion of your behavior to-day. Why!" His indignation overcame him. "I offered the idiot five hundred dollars for that tub of his, and he wouldn't take it! It's only luck that he didn't drown us. See, here, you! I oughtn't to pay a cent, but I'm willing to make good the damage to your craft. As for employing you as sailing-master for my yacht, which I intended, that's out of the question. I'm through with you. Now what's the figure?"

"Ten dollars," said Emory stolidly.

The bride stepped forward with her hand extended.

"Captain Emory," she began, "I want to——"

"Don't be a fool, Katherine!" interrupted her husband. "You come with me."

"Ed," said Cap'n Taylor, "there ain't another skipper in these waters could have done it."

With the praises ringing in his ears, Ed turned to his wife. Then he saw the look in her eyes.

"Oh!" she whispered fiercely. "You've spoiled our only chance to be anybody in this world! Why didn't I marry a *man?"*

And, as it happened, Katherine Talford, beside her mother on the seat of the glittering auto, was thinking that very thing.

SOMETIMES

ACROSS the fields of long ago
He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad with face aglow—
The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully,
Once he has crept within—
I wonder he still hopes to see
The man I might have been!

THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

A THIEF IN THE NIGHT



By Campbell McCulloch

CHIN in hand, Mrs. Scott Carew had sat for hours. The fire had died down until it was the merest kernel of a glow in a bed of blackness, and mentally she had compared it, but an instant ago, to herself. Her thoughts roamed backward to the days when she had been young, unspoiled; when the world had been a glowing rosary; the shadows so dim and indistinct that they were imperceptible to the eyes of youth; when life had seemed to hold such promise, and love was anxiously awaited as a messenger of even greater joy. Now hope had died down into a faintly burning coal, surrounded by the ashes of the past, and growing less with every passing moment.

Dimly conscious of the soft rustling of the trees outside, she was casting up the cost and balancing such triumphs as she had had against the payment she had made for them. They seemed pitifully small and inconsequential now when viewed in the light of their worth.

The moonlight fell in a broad stream across the boudoir floor, and seemed to make the surrounding gloom but more apparent by the contrast; while from some adjoining chamber there flowed on unceasingly the stertorous breathing of some one steeped in heavy sleep. Upon the softly moving air there hung a faint odor of alcohol, and, as she pondered, the compelling boom of a clock in the hall below announced the second hour of the new day. Outside could be heard the measured tread of a policeman, which gradually grew less until it passed entirely away.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a scuffling sound and a slight creak, and the band of moonlight was momentarily broken by a moving shadow. Mrs. Carew sat suddenly erect, her eyes widening and her breast quickening, like a statue galvanized to life by a passing current. Quietly she reached her jeweled hand to the mantel above her and grasped a silver-mounted revolver; then, rising carefully to still the rustling of her dinner-gown, she moved deeper into the room.

Again the shadow fell athwart the moonbeams, and these were obscured altogether as the window was softly raised, and a slim shape thrust itself through the opening and dropped lightly into the room. Noiselessly the shadow moved to the dressing-table where lay the jewels their owner had removed but a short time before.

Then came a blaze of light, and the visitor turned with a frightened gasp to confront a figure in white satin, one hand on the electric switch, and the other presenting a gleaming weapon. For a moment the tableau held thus, then Mrs. Carew voiced a short, hard laugh.

"A woman!" she said. "Rather late for an informal call, is it not?" And she curiously studied the slight, girlish figure, with the large, frightened eyes and the pale face that stood before her.

"What are you going to do?" asked the girl, in a terrified whisper.

"Call a policeman," replied Mrs. Carew.

"Not that. Anything but that. See! I've stolen nothing."

"I have my own vigilance to thank, then. Move farther from that window,

please. That's better. Now I'd like to have a closer look at you."

Mrs. Carew moved forward, keeping a steady eye upon her visitor, and dropped into a chair beside the inlaid table on which stood the telephone.

"Come over here. So! That will do. I would advise you not to move unless I give you permission, as I shoot rather well."

"You would not——" began the girl.

"I assure you the law gives me that privilege should I find it necessary," replied the woman harshly. "You see you occupy a somewhat peculiar position as an—er—unbidden guest, shall we call it?"

"I am not really a——" said the girl hastily.

"No, you don't look it," frankly admitted Mrs. Carew, interrupting. "You have not at all the appearance of a hardened criminal. You're frightened. I should judge you've not had much experience in your—er—chosen profession. Still, appearances are deceptive."

"This is the first time. I swear it."

"Indeed! May I ask what your exact intentions were when you called?"

"I wanted money. I was—am—desperate. I would risk anything, everything, for a little money. But you will let me go. You are not one to punish," pleaded the girl.

"Am I not? Still, as I said, appearances are deceptive. It is my duty to hand you over to the authorities."

"No! No!" moaned the girl, clasping her hands.

"Perhaps you are aware that you can be sent to prison for ten years for—this," said the woman easily.

"I'll die first," replied the girl, her eyes blazing.

"Be quiet. Do you know, you impress me as being somewhat above your employment. Sit down. Here. Opposite me." Mrs. Carew indicated the chair on the other side of the table. "And kindly recollect that I still have the revolver."

The girl—she seemed hardly more than twenty—did as she was bid, and sat staring anxiously at the woman before her. She was poorly dressed in faded black, and wore a man's soft felt hat; her hands were seamed and worn, and she still carried a small electric torch in one of them. Mrs. Carew's eyes fell upon this.

"I see you are equipped with the latest improvements in your trade," she commented sarcastically. "Perhaps you have a—er—life-preserver it is called, I believe, also."

The girl's eyes traveled to the implement in her hand, and she smiled wanly as she laid it down.

"It is my husband's," she said. "He is an electrical engineer."

"How convenient," the woman sneered, while a scornful smile swept over her mouth.

The girl flushed at the tone, but kept silent. Carefully she scrutinized her captor, taking in every detail of the woman before her, from the crown of her perfectly coiffured head to the tips of the dainty satin slippers that peeped from beneath the heavily brocaded gown. But it was the face that seemed to hold her interest. The perfect features; the eyes with the strange hardness lurking in their depths; the set lines of the mouth and chin, and the apparent soullessness of her all.

"You will let me go?" she implored at last.

"Why should I?" asked Mrs. Carew, with well-bred surprise. "You entered my room to steal. You know what society doles out to those that break the law."

"I came for bread. Society owes me that, at least," defended the girl.

"I do not keep bread in my bedroom. You should have gone to the kitchen. Besides, those jewels are a costly substitute for bread. The necklace alone would purchase——"

"Relief from intolerable misery for a hundred families. I spoke figuratively," returned the girl, with vehemence.

"You use good English," said the woman, studying her again. "This seems a strange business for a woman of refinement—burglary."

"I have a reason," said the other shortly.

"Yes. Most of them have, I suppose," mused the woman. "You, I expect, were driven to it by your lover, with threats of a beating if you failed."

"How dare you?" retorted the girl, with an angry flush, springing to her feet, her eyes blazing and her bosom heaving. "How dare you say that? I'm just as respectable as——" She stopped suddenly, clenching her hands.

Mrs. Carew laughed scornfully.

"As I am, you were about to say," she remarked, her dark eyes glinting savagely. "I must say it looks like it; doesn't it? But your appearance here and in this manner somewhat belies the statement, don't you think?"

"You are cruel, cruel!" breathed the girl.

"And what have you done to merit other treatment?" asked the woman.

"Nothing," cried the girl. "For God's sake let me go!"

Mrs. Carew stared at her frowningly, seeming to turn over in her mind the strange situation in which she found herself. She motioned the girl to the chair again abstractedly; and when she had seated herself there was a silence, Mrs. Carew tapping idly with the pistol on the polished surface of the table. Then she looked at her visitor again calmly.

"I wonder how women would get on if they could not lie," she mused. "How it would be if the naturalness was not bred out of them by the nature of their environment; if their lives were not one long, artificial falsehood from the cradle to the grave; if they were honest enough to be true to their own selves, and less the creatures of necessity."

She paused, and then went on:

"You mentioned your husband. You are married, then?"

"Three years."

"He made you do this?"

"No! No! He knows nothing of it. Nothing," replied the girl feverishly. "Ah, can't you let me go? It means so much. He'll miss me, and I've been gone now three hours."

"An eternity, and after three years. How touching!" laughed the other woman. "I suppose he will find consolation elsewhere should you not—return. Some other face, eh?"

"Stop!" said the girl commandingly. "You don't understand. He's ill; dying at this moment for all I know, while you keep me here."

"The old story," commented Mrs. Carew cuttingly. "With a change, however. Usually it is the sick wife and three children starving in a garret, is it not? I have always heard that the confirmed house-breaker weeps bitterly while describing the misfortune that drove him from his comfortable clerkship to burglary. There are seldom any variations. You are a novelty, however, though you still retain the afflicted and starving relative." And she smiled with an affectation of ennui.

"You don't believe me?" asked the girl.

"Believe you? Pardon me. Why should I? Criminals always lie, don't they? It's a part of the ethics of the trade, I suppose."

The girl was about to speak, but from the room behind her came a heavy groan and a movement. She sprang to her feet instantly.

"It's nothing," said Mrs. Carew harshly. "At least, it might as well be nothing."

Noting the startled look of inquiry, she went on:

"I, too, am burdened with a husband. He also forces me to disagreeable tasks. Quite a bond of sympathy between us, is it not? And yet I suppose I must have liked him—once," she mused.

"Once?" queried the girl.

"Yes, once," said the elder woman. "It doesn't last, does it? The momentary enthusiasm we call love. It's a firefly of the senses; a flashing glimpse of happiness to lure us on to—hell."

The girl stared at her, fascinated, and, noting it, the other went on:

"You seem astonished. Even shocked. Your husband — admitting what you say is true and you have one —do you still catch a glimpse of the firefly?"

"I love my husband. Love every fiber of his being. I'd go through anything, prison, if it would buy him health

again, and ease. You smile. You, with everything a woman needs. luxury, comfort; no thought of hardship or misery or want; cold or hunger. You don't understand. You're right when you say the naturalness has been bred out of you. It has left you nothing but a cold statue; a doll, without feeling; without emotion."

Mrs. Carew looked at her admiringly.

"You say it well," she commented. "You are almost convincing. May I ask if this man who has stirred you so returns this fervid protestation? To-night, for instance; what is he doing, thinking, to-night?"

"I told you," cried the girl, her eyes filling with tears. "He's ill; desperately ill with typhoid."

"Then why are you here?" demanded Mrs. Carew. "Why should you set upon a venture like this at such a time?"

"Don't you understand?" returned the girl brokenly. "There is no money, no food, no anything."

"Then why not work? Why break the laws and incur the danger of the penalty? Don't you know it's not only risky, but wrong? Hark! There's the officer passing now. Had you no fear of being caught? What did you imagine policemen were paid to do?"

"Do you think I have not weighed the cost?" cried the girl passionately. "Do you suppose I did not know? You say society must protect itself. You make laws and hire thugs to enforce them. Then we ask for work, and you turn and tell us you have nothing for us. You take away our only chance, and then punish us for trying to eke out a miserable existence. Wrong? Is it wrong to keep oneself alive? You have everything. I have nothing. Is it strange that I should resort to this to keep the balance true?"

She stopped, her breast heaving and her voice breaking with emotion.

Mrs. Carew looked at her amusedly. "Cant," she said bitterly. "The usual whine. Can you not be honest, even with yourself?"

"Honest? God help me, I've tried to be. In all my life I do not think I've ever harmed a living thing. Until now I've never taken a pin that was not rightfully mine."

"Then why begin?"

"Because I must. The man I love better than my life is dying for lack of nourishment—the barest necessity. Ah, try to put yourself in my place. Your husband is lying ill——"

"Ill? Stupefied with drink rather. Hear him. Smell the reek of it, even here," the other declared bitterly.

"Then imagine him at death's door. Not a crust even in the room. Unconscious. Ah, God, the pity of it, the injustice! And then the child——"

"There is a child?"

"A year old. Perhaps you know what that means, to hear its cries."

Mrs. Carew looked off through the window.

"I had a child once—a little girl," she said. "But she—went away."

"Then think of her had she lived. Think of what tortures you would have felt had she been hungry. Have you no pity? No heart?"

"Heart?" said the other dully. "Heart? Yes, I had a heart. I loved once, or thought I did—it is the same thing—and was happy. Then the child came. I lay in my bed for months, and in the end the baby died, and I went back to the border-land of death with her. When I recovered another woman had stolen my husband. Stolen him while I slept. There was nothing left but divorce. In the terrible loneliness I married that thing in there. Come! You asked me if I loved my husband. I will show you."

Quickly she led the way through the connecting door into the room beyond, and snapped on the lights. On the bed, sprawled out, red-faced, bloated, coarse, lay a man in evening clothes; his sparse hair matted down over his forehead, and every repulsive feature accentuated by the condition he was in. The fumes of drink hung sickeningly in the close air.

"That," said the woman tensely, pointing; "that is my husband. You asked me if I loved him. Do you ask me now?"

The girl turned away as Mrs. Carew switched off the lights and closed the door. Once more at the little table the elder woman said:

"That is what my life has become—a living pit."

The girl stretched out her hand across the table as if in protest, then withdrew it sharply. She seemed to study the proud, cold face of the woman opposite, as if striving to find a joint in the apparently impenetrable armor of ice that clothed her, then dropped her eyes again. There was silence between them, and only the muffled ticking of the great clock in the hall below took note of the passing moments.

At last the younger woman raised her eyes.

"You showed me—him," she said. "You have shown me yourself, and you blame him for what you are. Have you thought that he, perhaps, has cause for complaint also? Have you performed your whole duty by him? When you failed to give what he had a right to demand, were you not at fault?"

"I did not ask him to marry me," the other said fiercely. "He sought me out."

"But you gave yourself willingly, allowing him to think that you would be to him what a wife should be. It may be that he asked the bread of love, and you gave him a stone."

The other smiled sardonically.

"He is always like that," she said, indicating the room.

Down-stairs the clock boomed out three strokes, and the girl's face twitched with pain.

"Let me go," she implored. "While you keep me here he may be conscious, calling for me."

"And, getting no answer, think you have run off with some other; deserted him," replied Mrs. Carew.

"You—you *cat!*" thrust the girl, for want of a better word.

"Come, let us have an end to heroics," said Mrs. Carew easily. "Let us look the situation squarely in the face. You come here to rob—I state the thing baldly—and I find you in the act of taking my jewels. Now, why should I not protect myself, and others, from a similar loss in the future? You know what I mean."

Her fingers played carelessly with the receiver of the telephone at her elbow as she spoke. The girl sank limply back in the chair.

"There is no reason," she said helplessly.

"You admit it, then. You could not justly censure me for giving you up. I would be acting within my rights."

"I suppose so," said the girl wearily. "I have told you how it is, that I have been driven to it," she finished despairingly.

"Which may or may not be true," returned Mrs. Carew harshly. "I have only your word; the word of a thief."

"You are cruel, hard," moaned the other woman, her head sinking upon the table.

"I have a strange fancy for exact knowledge," said Mrs. Carew musingly. "It's a fad with me. You say one thing; you may mean another. Supposing what you say is true—that you have a husband; that he is desperately ill. I wonder how far you would go to save him."

"To any length," cried the girl, raising her tear-stained face. "Try me!"

"You said you would die for him—wait!" she commanded, raising her hand. "I know. It is a common enough expression. We hear it every day. In your case it may mean much, or nothing."

"I mean it," replied the girl softly, her eyes shining through the tears.

"Before you came this evening," went on Mrs. Carew, in a low tone, "I was debating death myself. I had almost made up my mind to solve the riddle; to find peace in place of—this." She swept a glance about the room.

"To kill yourself?" asked the girl, horrified.

"Do you think it wrong?" asked the elder woman. "Could you blame me, knowing what you know? See"—pulling out the drawer of the table and taking up a vial—"here is the mode of transit from here to—there. It is

morphia and *nux vomica*. An easy death and painless. I could take it—lie down on my bed there, and never wake again."

The girl stared at her, unbelieving.

"You would not. It would be a crime," she said solemnly.

"Nonsense," sneered the other. "But I will wait. I have a fancy to try you; to test your affection."

She arose quickly, crossed to an escritoire, and pulled out a rustling sheaf of yellow notes, which she threw upon the table beside the vial.

"There are three hundred dollars," she said. "Enough to buy food, proper attention, for the man you say you love; for whom you say you did this."

"You will give them to me?" asked the girl wonderingly.

"Perhaps. I will make a proposal. On your decision rests the life of your husband; your child." She leaned over the table, speaking slowly and distinctly.

"This"—she indicated the vial—"will not have a fatal effect for five hours; ample time for you to leave here with the money, reach your—garret"—she sneered—"and make such arrangements as may be necessary. You understand?"

The girl looked at her steadily, and under the gaze Mrs. Carew flushed and dropped her eyes.

"You mean that to save them, I—must—die?" she said thickly.

"Yes. Do you agree?"

"You wouldn't do—this thing," whispered the other, in terror. "You couldn't. You must have a heart—somewhere. God! The cruelty of it, the injustice!" She slipped to her knees beside the table, clasping the other's arm. "Say you are only trying me; that you don't mean it. Say it! Say it!" she cried, shaking the arm she held in a frenzy.

"I am trying you, yes, but I mean it. There is the money. Refuse it if you like. You know the alternative," said Mrs. Carew grimly.

"You devil! You devil!" moaned the girl, shaking with the agony of it. "To force me to such a thing. You have no right. No right!" she cried. "Have you no fear of God? No thought of what He will say to you when your time comes?"

"Which is it to be?" asked the other relentlessly.

"Give me time. Give me time," gasped the girl, hiding her face in her hands.

"I'll give you until that clock strikes again," was the reply, as the quarter hour sounded from below. "By then you will have decided, or I call the police."

She rose and began to pace the room, while the girl lay moaning on the floor, writhing in the agony of it all. The lights gleamed steadily through their rose-colored shades, and outside the twitter of some nightbird sounded harshly on the silence.

Slowly the minutes passed, and only the low sobbing of the recumbent figure broke rhythmically on the ear, punctuated now and then by the heavy breathing from the chamber beyond. The elder woman glanced at the girl and then turned toward the window, and stood looking out into the night with furrowed forehead. Her lips moved, and she muttered:

"I must know! I must know!"

With a crash that startled her the clock announced the half-hour, and she turned sharply to see the girl lift her head and stagger to her feet, holding to the table with one hand to steady herself. Quickly the woman crossed the room and stood beside her; and the contrast between them was even more marked as they stood together.

"Well?" she queried sharply. "Which is it to be?"

The girl swallowed with difficulty once or twice, and then advanced a shaking hand.

"Give me the bottle," she gasped chokingly.

"You have decided, then," said the other wonderingly.

"I have decided. I will take it and go."

The lines about Mrs. Carew's mouth softened perceptibly.

"Sit down," she said gently. Then, picking up the vial, she turned to the

stand behind her. When she again faced the girl, she held in her hand a glass with half an inch of colorless liquid in the bottom.

"You mean it?" she asked.

The girl nodded her head and stretched out her hand for the messenger of death. Slowly she gained her feet. Standing there a moment, she swayed weakly, and then said brokenly:

"God knows what I have done to you, or if the crime I almost committed was worth this sacrifice, but it will assuredly be accounted against you in the end, and you will suffer for it; you who play with human souls. *You* are the thief!" she cried. "You steal my life! Everything!" She paused. "You promise this will give me time? You're not deceiving me?"

"It will give you ample time," said the other gently, and watching her steadfastly.

"And you will give me the money and let me go?"

"I will give you the money and let you go."

Swiftly the girl raised the glass and drained it, then threw it down. Her face was deadly pale and her eyes burning as she picked up the yellow notes, but her hands were steady as a rock. She stood erect.

"You've had your way," she said tensely. "But this minute, as I stand here, I'd rather be as I am than such as you. Almost I could find it in my power to wrest that pistol from you and kill you, you she-devil; but if I did, it might be too late for what I have to do." She laughed hardly. "Too late! Now, let me out of this—hell."

She turned to the window, but the other put out a hand and plucked at her.

"Wait!" she said chokingly. "Wait! I have something to tell you."

She staggered slightly, then caught herself, and smiled; and it seemed as if the mask of ice that had enwrapped her had fallen from her, leaving something more womanly, more sweet, in its place.

The hardness, too, was gone from the eyes, and the sneering lines from the mouth.

"I think God must have sent you to me," she said softly. "Perhaps in His infinite mercy you were the instrument He chose to save me from myself at the eleventh hour; to show me that life is not all false and hard and cruel; to show me that there is such a thing as love and sacrifice——"

"Stop!" said the girl witheringly. "You blasphemer! You liar! I wonder God does not strike you dead where you stand, you——"

"Wait! You don't understand," said the other gently. "Perhaps I was cruel, heartless, all you have called me, but I had to know. Ah, I had to know. It was the only way to be sure. You took no poison. No"—as the girl started forward—"when I turned I put a little water in the glass. See, here is the bottle. Look!" And she threw the vial from her through the open window, where they heard it tinkle on the gravel a moment later. "I had to be sure, and you——"

The girl swayed suddenly forward, and then crumpled into a heap at her feet. For a moment the woman looked at her, and at the money lying scattered where it had fallen; then with a cry of pity she stooped and loosened the neck of the other's shabby gown.

"Poor child!" she said. "I'll be good to you for this—so good."

The PRETENDERS

By Owen Oliver

IV.

AUNT PHILIPPA



I WAS sitting in the armchair reading the evening paper when Omi rushed in and sat on me with a bang.

"Jimmy!" she cried. "The worst is going to happen!"

"It's only his teeth,"-I protested. I thought she meant the baby.

"It isn't the Wonder," she explained. "It's Aunt Philippa."

"What is the matter with her?" I inquired.

"She is coming to stay with us! For a whole week!"

"Why shouldn't she?" I asked. I did not know Aunt Philippa, but she had given us a very handsome wedding-present; and when the Wonder arrived, she had sent a pleasant little check in a pleasant little letter. So I was predisposed in her favor.

"James Edward," Omi said solemnly, "you don't know my mother's family."

"Naomi Rachel," I answered, "I know *one;* and that is sufficient."

"I'm not a bit like them," she declared. "I take after father; and I've always lived with his people. Mother's family are quite different. They're ever so good; appallingly good! They belong to the—the Strict Something! It's a sort of sect that doesn't approve of cards or music or dancing or theaters or novels or—anything! We shall have to hide our story-books and songs; and lock up the pictures and the statuary—especially the bronze Venus that Brush gave you. I shall have to wear my dowdiest things; and buy some *dowdier!* And we'll have to tell all the dear bad people we know to keep away; and go to chapel twice in the week, and three times on Sunday; and *never* laugh. Laughing is frivolous."

Omi puckered her mouth. I unpuckered it.

"That is worse than frivolous," she protested. "I am sure the Strict Somethings disapprove of it. I'd write and make excuses, only—you see, she might take a fancy to the Wonder. He's nine months old; and we must begin to think of his future."

"Ye-es. The old lady has behaved rather decently to us, O. Are you sure she is so—strict? You haven't seen her since you were ten, have you?"

Omi had lived abroad with her paternal grandmother till I carried her off to smoky London.

"They're all alike." Omi shook her hair loose and pushed it up again. "Poor old dad was in mortal terror of them; and granny would never let me visit them, because they cut off my curls when I was little and stayed there. Curls are frivolous! This is a frivolous scarf of yours, Jimmy!" She adjusted it. "You'll have to get a black one. You'll humor her, won't you, for the Wonder's sake?"

"Anything for a quiet life!" I promised.

"My boy!" said Omi. "You don't know what a quiet life is; but you soon will!"

So Omi wrote to tell Aunt Philippa that we should be delighted to see her on Monday next. We warned off our set—they are the nicest set any people could have the luck to be in; literary and artistic and musical, with a touch of the drama; and we call ourselves The Clan, and meet every fortnight at Villiers'.

On Sunday we stowed our mundane treasures away in a cupboard and hired some pastoral oleographs for the walls, and a hideous vase to put in the place of the bronze Venus. It's a gem!

On the Monday morning Omi brushed her curly hair straight, and put on a plain brown dress and a felt hat—even then she looked saucy!—and went to meet Aunt Philippa. When I came home from the office I found them sitting opposite to each other talking with long faces. I nearly started laughing when I saw Omi's; and when she spoke I was scarcely able to contain myself.

"James," she said primly, "this is Aunt Philippa."

Aunt Philippa rose and held out her hand. She was a slight, tall lady, a little under forty; very quiet in manner and dress, and rather pale, but unmistakably handsome. I rather took to her, and if Omi hadn't warned me I should have said: "Let's be friends, aunt," and kissed her. As it was, I made a very solemn bow.

"I am pleased to make your acquaintance, madam," I informed her.

She bowed very stiffly. The atmosphere seemed to be starched.

"Have you obtained the tickets for the magic-lantern to-night, James?" Omi inquired.

"Yes, Naomi," I said.

"Magic-lantern?" Aunt Philippa spoke in a doubtful tone.

"They are missionary pictures, aunt," Omi explained. "We should not think of going to a—a secular entertainment, should we, James?"

"Of course not, Naomi!" I agreed decidedly.

"Of course not," Aunt Philippa agreed.

"It is connected with the chapel," Omi added. "The pictures are about the heathen—the *converted* ones; and the dear missionary lectures!"

"And the minister gives an address, I suppose?" Aunt Philippa inquired, turning up her eyes.

"Certainly," I stated. "It is on the tickets."

I showed them to her; and she nodded.

"I have no doubt it will be very improving," she said; but I feared, from her manner, that she felt some scruples about going.

When I eat an incautious supper, my dreams still take the form of our dinner that evening. Aunt Philippa and Omi sat like two dark-robed statues. Omi kicked my shins whenever I made a secular remark, so I said little. Aunt Philippa said less. Omi would probably have held her tongue if she could, but she can't. So she used up most of "Light on the Daily Path," which she had bought the day before, and gave us the history of the Sunday-school which she had learned out of the *Chapel Magazine*.

We went to the lantern performance. The missionary was a cadaverous, sandy, sniveling humbug—the sort that returns safely from respectable lions and cannibals—but Omi was enthusiastic about him. She felt as though she couldn't bear to hear any more about the poor, dear converted heathen, she said. Aunt Philippa said that was just how *she* felt. I said that I felt so, too. It was true!

When we reached home Aunt Philippa went straight to bed. Omi and I had a quiet dance round the drawing-room. Then we went and got some of our treasures out of the cupboard and gloated over them. She showed me a string with seven pieces of paper on it, and tore one off, because one day of the "visitation" would have gone to-morrow.

The next day I had a holiday to help take Aunt Philippa out. We went to the British Museum in the morning and St. Paul's Cathedral in the afternoon. She and Omi went to a "meet-

ing" in the evening, but I was not well enough to accompany them. While they were out I ran round to the club and had a couple of rubbers at bridge, and won five and six. Omi called me a horrid, mean wretch when I told her, but I gave her half the winnings, and she forgave me. After Aunt Philippa had gone to bed we went out and had a race round the square. Omi ran into the policeman, but he said he had "run against worse things in his time," and we all laughed together.

The day after, Omi took Aunt Philippa to Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament and the Tower. Aunt Philippa was tired, and did not want to go out in the evening. She nursed the Wonder till he fell asleep. She seemed to like him; and I felt sure she wasn't a bad sort in her way. She talked rather sensibly to me while Omi was putting him to bed. We must remember, she said, that religion had its bright side; and that was the side for children; and it was not wise to repress childish playfulness too much, however foolish and frivolous it might seem. I promised to bear this in mind.

When Omi came down again she played hymns; and Aunt Philippa began singing softly. She had a lovely voice; and I asked her if she objected to oratorio. She said that she did not, and we ran nearly through "St. Paul" together. So it wasn't such a bad evening.

"Do you know, Omi girl," I remarked, when Aunt Philippa had gone to bed, "she means well; and I like her." And then I told her what she had said about the way to bring up the Wonder.

"I like her, too," Omi said. "Do you know, Jimmy, she fairly *hugged* the Wonder when she thought we weren't looking. Poor old auntie! To think of all the things she misses by being so good! I'm *sure* she would like to be jolly, if she didn't think it was wrong. Oh, Jimmy! It's the Villiers' evening to-morrow; and we can't go. And it's an amusement evening!"

On amusement evenings every one has to do whatever the hostess thinks he can do best to amuse the rest. So Omi has to tell them about the Wonder, and to draw caricatures—she is clever at drawing—and I have to tell them my latest story—I write a little; and Lanebury and Elsie Vane do dialogues; and Ferris gives us a scene out of his last comedy; and Villiers does conjuring tricks; and the singers sing their new songs; the artists outline their new pictures; and the journalists tell us the latest news; and the authors describe their latest characters; and everybody is jolly with everybody.

The Clan has a lot of country members, and they always time their visits to town so as to take in a meeting; and this time Mrs. Villiers expected Phil Carlyon, the great novelist. She was a woman! She had been only three times in the last three years—since I had belonged—and each time I had missed her; but Omi and I admired her books; and every one talked so much about "dear old Phil" that we were mad to see her. Omi proposed that I should go alone and leave her to look after Aunt Philippa; but I wouldn't do that. So we both had to give it up.

Omi took Aunt Philippa to Exeter Hall in the afternoon. They both came back looking very tired and depressed; but Aunt Philippa brightened up when she found a letter that had been redirected to her.

"I don't know if you could excuse me this evening," she asked nervously; "but I have such a very pressing reminder from some old friends of a promise to visit them if I was in town this evening? I wrote to put it off before I left home, but they seem to have asked a lot of people to meet me, and—if you *could* spare me?"

We thought that we could. When she went to dress, after dinner, I jumped over the sofa; and Omi danced a skirt-dance on the hearth-rug. We sent for a cab and dressed in a quarter of an hour, and tiptoed down the stairs with our fingers on our lips. We did not believe Aunt Philippa would approve of evening dress. Omi looked so fascinating in her finery that I almost wished I hadn't married her, so that I could do it again! And she said I

looked like a handsome stranger in my evening dress.

When we got to Villiers' we found The Clan sitting round the fire with the lights low. They put Omi and me in the dark part, next to the engaged couples, because they said we were "still semi-silly."

"Omi is bursting to tell us something about the Wonder," Mrs. Villiers said. "So she sha'n't. She does all the talking at home."

"True!" I interjected.

"And poor Jimmy shall have a chance here. Now, Jimmy! Talk! But remember"—she held up a warning finger—"the Wonder is barred."

"My dear Mrs. Villiers," I said, "I have a second Wonder to tell you about."

"Gracious!" cried Mrs. Harraden. "You *don't* mean to say that you've found out that he's twins!"

"I thought he was *too* wonderful!" remarked Callers. I mean the artist. Puns are allowed on amusement evenings only.

"He has said 'dada' and 'mama,' too," suggested Phyllis Meadows, the American soprano.

"Jimmy means that he has two 'heirs,'" stated Ferris, touching the bald spot on his head.

"He said 'dada' and 'mama' a month ago," Omi stated; "and he has more hair than *some* people!"

"What is the difference between the monkey's mother and the Prince of Wales?" Ferris asked her. "*You* ought to know."

"He's not a monkey," said Omi; "and it's something about a hairy parent and the heir apparent; and you're very nasty!"

"And *you* are quite wrong, Madame Omi! He is a monkey; and his mother *is* a belle; and the Prince of Wales is *no*-ble!"

"Oh, Mr. Ferris!" cried Omi, "you're nice!"

"And what is the difference between the Wonder and me? One's bawled to-day, and the other's bald always!"

"And the new wonder has never enjoyed a ball in her life!" I declared; and then I told them about Aunt Philippa, and our dissipations of the last few days—from the missionary and the magic-lantern to Exeter Hall.

"The worst of it all," I concluded, "is that she's so uncommonly likable. Somehow, you know—I can't explain exactly what I mean, but—it seems a shame that she should miss all the good things of life; knowing you nice, bad people, and——"

"And Phil Carlyon!" cried Mrs. Villiers. "Here's Phil! Dear old Phil!"

"Phil!" half of them cried, and rushed at a tall, handsome lady in beautiful evening dress, and held on to her. Omi and I gasped and held on to each other; for "Phil Carlyon" was—Aunt Philippa!

They shook hands for a long time. Then they led her to a big chair in the middle of the circle; and she smiled all round, and looked something like Omi does when she sees the Wonder.

"You dear old friends!" she said. "How good it is to see you again. It always is; but this time it's nicer than ever, because I've come from Iceland!"

"Couldn't *you* make the sun shine, Philippa?" Mrs. Harraden asked.

"No, dear. They don't believe in sunshine, you see. They are too good. I think they really are good, but—— They're a niece of mine; and a nephew-in-law. *Such* a pretty girl. She has a face that ought to be all mischief, and then it would be delightful." I pinched Omi. "He's a fine, manly-looking boy, too; just looks enough, and not enough to spoil him." Omi pinched me. "They have the dearest boy baby. The nurse calls him the Wonder."

"By Jove!" cried Villiers.

"We have heard of a similar baby," remarked Laura Green, the actress. She glanced at the shaded sofa where Omi and I sat, and giggled. They all did.

"They say 'mama' and 'dada,'" Elsie Vane remarked.

"And grow hair," added Ferris.

"And other people envy them," said Aunt Philippa, with a silvery laugh. "Don't they, Andrew?"

"When they have such delightful aunts," Ferris agreed promptly.

"That is coals of fire," said Aunt Philippa. "It burns—horrid!" She gave him a smile. "Well, these foolish young people think it sinful to be proud of their Wonder. They call him 'James' —poor little dot! I want to play bears with him and talk nonsense, but I daren't shock them. Oh, my dears! You don't know what I've been through!"

And then *she* told them the history of the visit—from the missionary and the magic-lantern to Exeter Hall.

She told it very funnily; and the rest laughed till they nearly fell off their chairs. They asked all sorts of questions about the poor benighted young man, and his poor benighted young wife, and their poor benighted young baby. It was such a relief, they said, to hear of a young couple whose baby wasn't a Wonder; and she would understand their feelings if she knew a pair who came there sometimes. They grinned at the dark place where Omi and I sat; and some who were in the shade threw cushions at us. We were too convulsed with laughter to throw them back. We can enjoy a joke against ourselves; and we knew very well that they liked us all the better because the Wonder was so wonderful to us.

"He really is a Wonder," Aunt Philippa concluded; "and they are very nice, too, in their dreadful way. I can't help being fond of them. It makes me quite sad when I think how they miss all the brightness of life; such as knowing all you dear, bad people, and——"

The dear, bad people burst into such a mighty yell of laughter that Aunt Philippa had to stop. She sat staring at them in a half-laughing, half-puzzled way, like Omi looks sometimes when she can't understand things. She and Aunt Philippa are really very like each other.

"I don't know what you are laughing at," Aunt Philippa protested at last.

Omi flashed across the hearth-rug like a pantomime fairy, and rushed upon Aunt Philippa with a scream like a child.

"Oh, auntie, dear!" she cried. "*I* do!"

They caught hold of each other and laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks. Everybody did. We often laugh at Villiers', but I never heard such laughter there before; and Aunt Philippa hugged Omi, and Omi hugged her; and I went and hugged her, too. We laughed all the evening, for as soon as we were quiet some one started again. Omi and Aunt Philippa and I laughed all the way home in the cab.

When we got indoors we unlocked the cupboard and put all our treasures in their usual places round the room; and "Phil Carlyon's" five novels were among them; and she declared that we should find ourselves in the sixth. Presently I found the string with four pieces of paper left on it, and brought that out, too, and explained it to Aunt Philippa; but Omi tore up half a quire of note-paper, and stuck it on in little pieces; and vowed that she would never tear any off, because Aunt Philippa was to stay with us whenever she liked, and for as long as she liked; and Aunt Philippa wiped her eyes suddenly.

"One's kin are one's kin," she said, "and"—she smiled at me—"one's kin-in-law—I have no one else, you know."

"Oh, *yes!*" Omi cried. "You have the Wonder!"

"Let us go and look at him," Aunt Philippa proposed; and we went upstairs, and held hands round the little chap's bed.

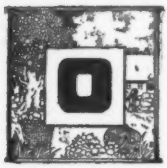
"There was a time, Omi," Aunt Philippa said softly, "when *you* were just a little—Wonder."

"Omi will always be wonderful," I said.

It is all very wonderful, when you come to think of it—life and love.

The LIGHT on BROWERS

By BROUGHTON BRANDENBURG



H, Mr. Duncan! Mr. Duncan!"

A voice I did not know was calling me from the street crowd. I was just leaving the building in which Lawrence Rand and I had our offices, and naturally turned back to the entrance. Again the call came, and this time almost at my elbow. The voice belonged to a clean-cut young chap in an ulster, who was just alighting from a big automobile drawing in sharply to the curb.

"Pardon me, Mr. Duncan, I know you from seeing you in court. My name is Michaels, and I am secretary to ex-Senator Hillis. Some nasty things have been going on at his place up in Orange County, and he telephoned me half an hour ago to get hold of this Mr. Lawrence Rand, who seems to figure in every big case these days, and bring him up with me. The senator is at home almost prostrated with worry, and also his wife would not hear of his leaving the house, so I came down to the office at 62 Wall Street to keep the machine going. Where is Mr. Rand?"

"I hope you will not misunderstand me, Mr. Michaels, when I say that unless this is a matter of some gravity——"

"Gravity! It is life and death to the senator, and Blyndvelt, his head gamekeeper, is near the point of death at either his own hands or those of the dastards who are trying to assassinate the senator."

"Very well. We have no time to lose. Wait until I get our emergency case, in which we carry arms, instruments, chemicals, etc., and we will pick Mr. Rand up at the club at which we were to dine together."

I ran to the elevator, went up to our floor, caught up the bag in the office, and a moment later was in the rear seat with Michaels. It was a cloudy October day, and the daylight was faint. We sped up-town to Madison Square at an unlawful rate of speed, and then over to roomy Madison Avenue, where we redoubled our pace till we drew up at the club door. Rand had evidently been at the front window and had seen us coming, for, just as I was about to alight, he came down the steps, a heavy coat over his arm.

"Hello, Dunk! what is the trouble?" said he.

"This is Mr. Michaels, Mr. Rand. Mr. Michaels is secretary to Senator Hillis, the railroad magnate, and there is some sort of a dangerous condition of affairs which the senator wants you to look into on his place in Orange County."

"Yes, I know, he has several thousand acres of very wild land up there. Tuxedo is the nearest station, is it not? I thought so. Well, let me see, it is now six-ten. We have missed the Tuxedo express. Do you want us to go up to-night?"

"Yes, if you can. This car can take us up there in time for dinner. I have coats and robes. I expect it will be a trifle cold."

"All right," said Rand quickly, step-

ping in. "Go by my studio in the Nevington Arms, and we will pick up Tom Rahway. This man is a big Indian who attached himself to me out West some years ago, and he is my patient shadow. He may be of some service."

In twenty minutes we four—Michaels, Rand, the big, silent, college-bred Sioux, and myself—were crowded in the tonneau, for we had topped the hill beyond the Weehawken Ferry, and were driving into the face of a northwest wind on our way to Paterson, where we would turn toward Suffern.

As we tore along, a swirl of dead leaves caught up with the dust of the wood trailing away behind us, Michaels told us of the strange happenings at Wanaque Glen, as the Hillis estate was called.

As early as the preceding May, servants on the estate had heard at night, or averred that they heard, silvery bugle-calls faint and eerie high up among the rocks of Browers, as the particular peak of the Sterling Mountains immediately to the west of Wanaque Glen was called. Senator Hillis, his wife, and daughter were in California at the time, and did not come to their house until July, and found that the only thing that had prevented wild panic among the servants was the skepticism of Dennis, the veteran butler, who was slightly deaf.

For many miles to the west there was not a human habitation in the hills, the nearest being those at the upper end of Greenwood Lake Valley. Scattered through the mountain glens, however, were what were called by the natives who stagnated half a century ago, "old house places," clearings, a few tumbled beams and stones, an old well, or a walled spring to mark what had once been a farm, but was long since deserted; and even the name of the family that lived there had been forgotten.

The wild counties of New York State have eighteen thousand deserted farms. When the rough lands failed to produce, the farmers joined the grand movement that settled the Mississippi Valley. Vast reaches of what were once prosperous Dutch and English agricultural communities are now untenanted lands, reverted to the State or absorbed for a dollar or so an acre by speculative politicians buying up watersheds, or captains of industry surrounding country homes with great game-preserves, that are as wild as Quebec, yet within two or three hours of Wall Street.

Hillis had bought deserted lands for the last ten years till his acreage was almost one-third of that part of the country. Human beings in those hills were only trespassing hunters from Greenwood, or perhaps a vagrant botanist or artist. Bugle-calls at midnight, heard a score of times in two or three months, were likely to be awarded a supernatural explanation, especially since the Colonial troops had battled on these hills more than once. On the other side of the mountain was the old mine whence the iron had been taken that was ferried over Greenwood at night to a furnace concealed in a glen, and there many of Washington's cannon were cast inside the lines of territory held by the British.

One night Miss Gertrude Hillis was driving with a Mr. Bainbridge Moody, the son of a millionaire who had a country-place near the many homes of the wealthy in Tuxedo Park; and they had climbed far up the narrow old road that cut through the hills to Mount Peter and on to Warwick. Suddenly, through the stillness of this night came the peal of a military call up among the rocks over their heads. It was followed by another, and in a little while a third. They were so distinct as to be unmistakable, even mingled with the sound of the wheels of the runabout and the horse's hurrying hoofs on the stones. Miss Hillis was so terrified that she collapsed when she reached home.

Her father had been so incensed that he telephoned in all directions to guides, deputy sheriffs, road-house keepers, and woodsmen, ordering all the roads watched by his authority as a game-warden; and then his men scoured the enclosed territory for three days, and lay in wait during the two intervening nights, without discovering anything

significant except the body of a man which had been in the open for several years at least. By the clothing and a trout-rod lying beside the remains, two guides from Greenwood identified the dead man as a sportsman from Philadelphia who had mysteriously disappeared some years before. It was conjectured that he had fallen dead from natural causes, and in that lonely region his corpse had remained unseen by human eyes.

Though this search quieted the apprehensions of all of the sensible people who had been alarmed, the finding of the body was distorted into various horrible tales by the ignorant and superstitious, and the dread of the night on Browers became an established local terror.

On the word of various country worthies, the bugle was heard many times during the summer, but only two persons whose word and senses were dependable declared that the calls had reoccurred. The matter had been very nearly forgotten until a fortnight before—one night as Hillis, his gamekeeper, and two guests who had been duck-shooting at Mt. Bashan Pond were riding home in a carryall and were within a half-mile of home, one of the guests had called attention to a light on the mountain.

It had been a small, white flash, and had instantly vanished. Hillis said some poachers from Greenwood were up there, doubtless, and the party was watching the hillside, when once again the light showed; a pure, white, strong ray, such as no lantern or firelight could throw. It was not large, but was easily seen in the clear air. It glowed for only a second.

The occurrence was puzzling, and the old gamekeeper, who was a dogged Sullivan County woodsman, without saying anything to Senator Hillis, had marshaled his underlings and posted all the roads and trails that led down from Browers. Not a poacher came down that night.

One morning, about a week later, Senator Hillis was sitting on his horse at the stepping-block, when there came a startling crash. A stained-glass window of the library was shattered, and the report of a shot from up on the mountain came echoing down through the woods.

A few days later, in the dust of the road leading into the park district, a servant found a letter which the secretary had in his pocket. It was written on cheap ruled foolscap, and was uninclosed. The writing was in a perfect copper-plate style; a beautiful old-fashioned script, and the wording was as follows:

MOST DISHONORABLE SIR: Pray accept the timely warning of a humble instrument of Heaven who has been chosen to punish you for your atrocious crimes against mankind. You have robbed the poor to enrich yourself. My own flesh and blood you have ground in the mill and unjustly appropriated the grist. The sword hangs over your head unseen. An unsuspected hand will touch the hair.

There was nothing to show that the threat was meant for Senator Hillis; but it was not the first he had received in his lifetime, and, coupled with the bullet fired into the library window, it was probable his life was sought.

Just the afternoon before he had gone upon the mountainside, against his wife's wishes, accompanied by Blyndvelt, the old gamekeeper, and they had bagged four partridges. Coming home in the dusk, Hillis had been walking in front, and when a half-mile from the house had addressed some remark to the man. Receiving no answer, he turned and found himself alone. Shouting out the man's name repeatedly, there was still no answer. Then he retraced his steps, and about three hundred yards back, hearing groans, had discovered Blyndvelt in a dying condition at the bottom of a little ravine. On his head were two bad wounds. His skull was fractured, and on his face was a burn the size of a silver dollar, which could in no way be accounted for.

Looking up the mountain, Hillis saw the white, mysterious light flash twice at no great distance above him. By blowing his field-whistle he called help from the house. Blyndvelt was carried home, and now hung between life and

death. Such was the status of the case when we were called in.

We were stiff and sore and chilled to the bone when we drew in at Wanaque Glen, the lights of the car cutting a path into the wooded gloom, that only served to accentuate the loneliness of the region. After dinner Rand and I conferred with the senator and the second gamekeeper, who was a native of Greenwood, Tom Rahway and Michaels sitting by. Rand first examined the letter under the lenses, then had the senator's field-map of that corner of the county laid on the table, and carefully drew in on it every trail, pond, marsh, brook, precipice, cave, etc., that the clear-headed Greenwood man could recall.

If one were to take the letter M and rest the left lower point on Hillis' home, then let the left upper point rest on the millionaire Moody's residence a mile due east, the right lower point would mark the two-room cabin of a surly old native named Coombs, who had three lazy, loutish, sulky sons. The lower tip of the V would locate the handsome house of another millionaire, Gerald Scott, a hard rival and bitter enemy of Hillis; while the upper right-hand point of the M would fall only a trifle short of the beginning of the park, with its many residences.

To the west of Browers were more mountains and wilderness till the sparse settlement of Greenwood Valley was reached, alive in the time with vacationers; but at this season left to the few score residents, a most primitive people.

A half-mile back of Wanaque Glen, and two hundred feet higher than the house, cut by the ravine in which Blyndvelt had been found, was a shelf that had been cleared by fire. It commanded an excellent view of the slopes above.

"Duncan," said Rand, "I want you to get out a range-finder from the case, prepare some of the comforts of life, and take your station at night indefinitely on that burned spot."

"You mean begin to-night?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, why not?"

I had no answer that I could make.

"Don't take your eyes off the upper rocks. The instant you see the light swing the instrument on it, and fix it, then report to the house. Before you go help me examine Blyndvelt."

We went up to his room. The doctor was just ready to leave, having brought a second nurse for the relief of the first. It was impossible to examine the wounds, and so Rand conferred with the doctor a moment, then turned his attention to the burn. This he scrutinized minutely, and when he had finished he said:

"Well, Duncan, you take to the mountain while Tom and I go down to the railway-station. I may see you in the morning."

With a flask of brandy, a pocket full of cigars, a heavy coat, a camp-stool, and the range-finder and tripod, I left the house, guided by the second gamekeeper; and, after a twenty minutes' walk along a rough trail, we turned into the burned area, wound our way among stumps dimly seen by the light of the moon behind clouds, and then I sat down behind the instrument, while the man returned to the house.

As his footsteps died away down the trail, it seemed as if the very stillness and loneliness rose up and smote me with crushing force. I was alone on this desolate mountainside, with a mysterious terror lurking in the rocks above me. The wind had dropped, and it was only now and then that there was a gust that rattled and clattered the bare branches and sent a shuddering whisper through the thickets and dead leaves.

Gradually the tension grew till my senses were so alert that the honking of some belated triangle of geese bound southward above the cloud-field, and not yet settled for the night, came plainly to my ears. When I struck a match in the shelter of my coat to light a cigar, the little explosion seemed so loud and so out of place that I started involuntarily. It took a certain amount of logic for me to remain at my post, but gradually the tension relaxed, and

I became possessed of the patient apathy that keeps the hunters of big game beside pools.

It was perhaps two hours after I had taken my place before anything happened. Then suddenly, seemingly from a glen, judging by the echoes, came the clear-cut, silvery laran-ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra of an artillery bugle!

I sprang to my feet, tingling in every nerve. The sound could not have proceeded from a locality farther than four hundred yards higher up. Again came the ringing call, different this time, and a trifle nearer, and it was followed by a high, thin voice calling out military commands; only these sounds were so faint I could not be sure. It may have been echoes combined with a gust that blew just then, all framed into a significant form by my quivering imagination.

I waited with my hand on my Luger and my teeth set in my cigar. One, three minutes, five minutes, and then far and faint, almost lost among the rocks, came another strain from the bugle. After that nothing more till daylight.

When I got back to the house I found Rand and Tom Rahway gone. Rand had asked Hillis to allow the Indian to select moccasins and a habit from his gun-room, and then the Indian, armed only with a long knife, had taken to the woods after a few hours' sleep. He had not been gone ten minutes before I came in. Rand had left on the midnight train, leaving no word as to where he was going.

I slept long and deeply, and was only wakened in mid-afternoon by Michaels, who came to tell me that Blyndvelt was partly conscious, and was trying to talk. I hurried to him as soon as I could dress. He was sitting up in bed, his white face, red beard, and the mass of white bandages making a shocking picture. With wild gesticulations he tried to talk, but all I could make out was "He was sneaking behind the old man." "Yes, yes, I'll get him." "Look out, senator; look out!" These phrases repeated over and over.

About dark he lapsed into coma; and, after a good dinner, I went out to my station again without having mentioned the experience of the night before. There had been no message from Rand.

A strong north wind was blowing, and I built myself a wind-break of some brush tops piled up against a burned stump. If there were any unusual sounds they were carried away by the blast. It was about eleven o'clock that my eye caught a quick gleam on a southerly spur of Browers, and then a good showing of that small white light. I swung the range-finder over, but it was gone before I had a sight. Shortly after midnight, however, it showed again for fully three seconds, and then I got my sight, tightened the screws, and set out for the house.

Rand had arrived and was in his room asleep. Pursuant to his instructions, I wakened him, and told him what had occurred.

"That is very good," said he, and turned over and went to sleep again.

It was nine o'clock the next day when my breakfast was brought up with a note from Rand. He had left the house half an hour before. The message read:

> There has been no sign or message from Tom Rahway. It may be that he has met his match for once. I have been out to the range-finder and fixed the spot on the mountainside. The rocks are so nearly bare that a good pair of field-glasses should pick up any movement on this side in to-day's bright sunlight. Get a pair from Hillis or some of the neighbors and take your station on the burned plateau again. L. R.

Just as I was ready to go out Senator Hillis called me into his library, carefully closed the door, and said:

"Mr. Duncan, I have been reluctant to say so, but numerous friends of mine have told me that owing to my winning an important suit in the Illinois supreme court last week, and taking away from my friend Scott across the way terminal properties, with several million dollars, he has grown so bitter against me that he threatens to shoot me on sight. He is a dangerous enemy, and I know where his agents have been instructed to do murder, if necessary, on more than one occasion. I should

not be surprised if all of this unexplainable affair were not intended to harass and worry me; and perhaps one of his hirelings is merely waiting his chance to put a bullet into me from a safe distance."

I took half an hour to go over this phase of the case, and after I had heard all he had to tell, it was a wonder to me that some one, especially among the people of the region whom he had robbed, cheated, oppressed, and bitterly prosecuted for small offenses, had not waylaid Gerald Scott long ere this.

Returning to the burned plateau with a pair of powerful glasses loaned me by the senator, I took up a station on the sunny side of a hummock of rock, and waited, scanning every shoulder, ravine, and thicket of the mountainside. About two o'clock that afternoon the unexpected happened.

Far off to the south I saw a gray figure moving; and even with the glasses could make out nothing more than that it was some countryman ascending the hill from back of the Coombs place. He was soon lost to view, and seemed to me to turn southward, as if going toward Sterling Pond. In a very few minutes more a rock suddenly began to move on top of a clump on the very summit of a ridge of Browers. It was so sharp against the sky-line that it had often caught my eye.

Getting the glasses focused, I was astonished to see that what I had thought was a brown boulder was Tom Rahway, now rising to his knee and taking careful aim with a gun at something farther along the ridge to the north and somewhat below him. I knew he had taken only a knife, and wondered where he had secured an additional weapon. From its extraordinary length it must be an old flint-lock rifle. Quickly swinging the glasses along in the line of his aim, I was horrified to see that his bead was drawn on Lawrence Rand, standing on a point of rock, smoking fiercely with arms folded, and evidently in a brown study.

I cried out with my full lung-power, and caught at my Luger, but stopped, realizing my helplessness, for neither voice nor sound of shot could reach him up there with the wind blowing down the hill.

Several times the big Sioux raised and lowered the rifle without firing; and then I perceived that he was aiming at some object other than Rand. I scrutinized the intervening ground closely, and at last detected a bush in movement not forty feet from Rand, and from it protruded another barrel, that was to a certainty pointed at him.

It seemed hours that this situation remained unchanged; then Rand moved on down on the other side, and the death that hovered over him followed, for in a few minutes Tom Rahway left his post and stole down out of sight on the other side, his rifle still poised. It was evidently a case of the hunter hunted; and I was sure that Rand knew of the presence of neither the unknown nor Tom Rahway, and that the Indian was afraid to make his presence known, trusting to his ability to fire just in time to save Rand's life.

I watched till dusk, consumed with anxiety, but saw no more; then I hurried back to the house, and when I had told Hillis, Michaels, and the doctor of what I had seen, the excitement was intense. I had restrained my own impulse to go up on the mountain that afternoon because I knew, by experience, the benefit of sticking to Rand's orders; but these men insisted on sallying forth immediately. I entreated, argued, threatened, but Hillis summoned two gamekeepers, the second one and a lad named Carrol; then, armed with rifles and shotguns loaded with buckshot cartridges, we set out in the second hour of dark.

The second gamekeeper knew from my description the clump of rocks where the Sioux had been hidden; and for an hour we climbed slowly up, first on the road, then on an old trail, and at last turned squarely into the untracked forest.

It was nasty work blundering along over the rocks, through little bogs where the basalt had formed undrained cups, stumbling over the roots of trees,

swept by thorny bushes, or clambering up and down narrow ravines, with a chilly brook concealed at the bottom under the yielding piles of dead leaves.

At last we gained the summit where Tom Rahway had been crouching. Below in the valley we could see the lights of Tuxedo Park; and a night train of the Erie went rushing on toward the great city. When we had arrived, the others realized the truth of what I had said at the house. It was a senseless quest. The place was as quiet as a grave; and of the little drama of which I had seen a part that day there was not the slightest trace.

Perhaps somewhere down the western slope lay a man dead whom I had seen alive. Perhaps the dead were more than one. There was certainly no one on the summit.

We sat smoking and resting, and discussed the absorbing mystery in hushed voices. I learned then for the first time that, though the tale of the bugle-calls was common property in the region, no one but the persons immediately concerned had been informed by Hillis or his trusted employees of the further ramifications of the case. In view of the dénouement, I have always been glad that this was so.

Just as we were rising to return, there came echoing up the western slope a sound so horrible that we stood as if frozen in our tracks. A high, crackling, demoniacal laugh!

There was a full minute of silence, then something closely akin to a mouthed military command reached our ears, and the mysterious bugle broke out in dainty fanfare. Its echoes died away in the upper valley. I realized that it might play there all night, and be unheard on the Tuxedo side of Browers.

Another abrupt command, and a flare of red light in the tree-tops not far ahead! Then the steady tramp of marching feet, mingled with the rattle of arms, and in a moment the sounds died away, as if the strange company had marched out of hearing. After a little space, before we could concoct a plan of action, they were heard on the other side of the ridge. A sharp command to countermarch was followed by another ringing call that must have been audible far down there by the Hillis house.

With every weapon ready for instant use, we crept north along the ridge, picking our perilous way over the bare rocks till we came unexpectedly to a cleft forty feet wide in the hog-back. The wall on our side overhung; and in the dark below the uncanny military command was marching west with measured tread.

We followed slowly along the brink, unable to keep up with their pace. Following the sounds, it was apparent that after they had marched through the earth-floored cleft they turned sharply to the south, so that their course formed an L. Ahead we saw the light, a faint, red glow, unlike the white ray we sought, shining up against the trees.

We came to another brink, and looked down perhaps fifty feet. The rocks formed a perfect oval pit, with a passageway leading north to the cleft. In a tall iron pot burned a small fire, newly lit. Behind it was the opening of a small cave, with the vine curtain drawn aside, and held back by three old rifles of varied sorts. Underneath us, hidden from our sight by the overhanging precipice, was the little army; but in the center of the pit, in the light of the fire, pacing back and forth before his men, was the strange commander.

An old man he was, with unkempt, gray hair and beard, and a wretched outfit of clothes. Around him was an old belt with a swordless scabbard. On his head was a moth-eaten Continental cocked hat, and over his shoulder hung a brass bugle, green with age and misuse. He was addressing his troops in an incoherent, violent strain, in which he was threatening some one. Once or twice he mentioned the name of Gerald Scott. One look into his face showed the wild eye and contorted features of the insane.

A rock slipped under Hillis' elbow and went clattering down. The old man raised his glaring eyes, snatched up one of the old guns, and was level-

ing it at us, when the troops under the rock ran out—merely Rand and Tom Rahway!

The gamekeeper blazed away, nevertheless, with a shotgun in his excitement, and blew the cocked hat from the old lunatic's head. He dropped the rifle, bounded like a deer for the opening of the pit, and was gone in the darkness before any could stay him.

"Of all the blundering fools that ever drew breath!" shouted Rand, shaking his fist up at the gamekeeper.

"Hold on, Larry, explanations are in order," I called.

"Are *you* there, too, Dunk," he answered, in fine scorn. "Explanations? Yes, I should think there were. Come on down."

We made our way around, and descended with some difficulty into the little amphitheater. Tom had thrown some more twigs on the fire.

"Mr. Rand, how about chasing that old fellow?" panted the senator.

"Oh, let him go," said Rand. "We will get him later. There is not one chance in a thousand of overtaking him to-night."

I immediately related all that I have set down in the foregoing pages since I noted my last report to Rand. Senator Hillis quickly shouldered the responsibility for this night excursion, which seemed to have so thoroughly upset Rand's plans.

"Well, gentlemen," said Rand, "we may as well make the best of things. To begin with, we will try to simplify this case as much as possible. Let us take it up point by point. Blyndvelt's injuries were caused certainly by an accidental fall into the ravine, and I am glad to hear that he is going to recover. I examined the burn on his face, and found every indication that it had been made by a tiny bit of flame. In the ravine I found an unlit cigar and a burned match. His face had rested on the burning match where he lay. Without doubt he saw this poor creature, whom I have just had in hand, stealing along behind the senator here, and the next instant made a misstep and slipped down the ravine. The shot through the window was to a certainty the act of this same old man, for the slug I dug out of the library wall could have come only from one of these old guns.

"The letter found in the road struck me instantly as having been written by some well-educated person of advanced years. The script showed that. It was an old schoolmaster's hand. The diction was good proof of insanity on the part of the writer. The class feeling expressed showed poverty. I made immediate inquiries around this valley, but there was no one who filled the bill in these points—insane, poor, and educated.

"On the other side of the mountains there might be some one, so I took a train to New York, came up on the other line to Greenwood; and in the first minute of inquiry learned that old James McDaniel had been a teacher in the schools of the valley for thirty years; had lost his place on account of some offense he had given one of Gerald Scott's overseers, and he had long been living in a hut up the hill from the Black Rocks on the eastern shore of Greenwood.

"That hut, gentlemen, is less than three miles from where we now stand. In the last year he had pursued his fad of collecting Revolutionary relics to the point where he was believed insane by the people of that part of the lake. I found the hut deserted, no relics in sight, and, returning to the station, came back here.

"As there was no reason to believe that the threatening letter found in the road was meant any more for Senator Hillis than for some other prominent resident, I visited other gentlemen to ascertain if they had received such letters. Gerald Scott has two that match the one I carried. Therefore any attack on Senator Hillis would be the result of mistaken identity evidently.

"Next, not only because I was worried about Tom's long absence, but because I believed old McDaniel to be wandering in these mountains, I took to the rocks myself this morning. I found, what Tom has found, many indications

of passing feet and many places where piles of stones have been thrown down. Old McDaniel found me and stalked me, but Tom had found him the day before, and was on his trail. Just at dusk I discovered both of them.

"Watching McDaniel, whom I recognized by description, I began to play to his fad, singing an old Revolutionary song; and after a few minutes he came boldly up to me and enlisted me in an army of Continentals, which he imagines he is drilling up here to march down and crush Gerald Scott and his minions. I told him I had another recruit, and called in Tom Rahway.

"Since then, gentlemen, it has been merely a game of play to get him to reveal his plans and doings, and clear our mysteries. He stores his relics in this cave, and two or three nights out of each week has been parading back and forth through that cleft in the rocks with his imaginary army. When he came out on the Tuxedo side of Browers, the bugle was heard down in the valley, and then only.

"All the rest is incidental. He frequented no other part of the mountain, and could come and go from his hut unobserved. Several times, as he told us, he had led his army down the hill on the house of his enemy, but the army was always defeated. It must have been on one of these occasions that Blyndvelt saw him."

"Well, Mr. Rand, this is certainly remarkable. The strangest thing I have ever encountered, yet you have cleared it up beautifully," said Senator Hillis gleefully.

"Not so fast, senator. According to Mr. Duncan's observations last night when McDaniel was bugling at this end of Browers, what caused the mysterious light at the other end?"

In silence the men in the circle stared at each other.

"In view of the fact that we are not yet finished, suppose we put out the light and go quietly home to consider?" said Rand, overturning the pot and trampling on the burning twigs.

Hillis swore softly every now and then all the way down the mountains.

It is just as well, before passing on to the final dramatic scene, to state that the parties Hillis sent out to search for McDaniel in order to take him to a sanatorium, found the unfortunate old man's body in the marsh on the edge of Sterling Pond.

The next morning a servant came to my door and said:

"Mr. Duncan, Mr. Rand wishes to see you with the other gentlemen in the library."

Two or three of the oldest men on the place had been called in and stood by the door. Rand was pacing up and down, smoking.

"Gentlemen," said he, when we were assembled, "while we were on that particular shoulder of Browers last night, three anxious servants in this house simultaneously saw the white gleam of the light on the other, two miles away. Now, recently this light seems to have been seen in one locality only. One of the exact spots I have visited, and found a pile of boulders freshly disturbed. We have destroyed one fantastic tale of the supernatural on Browers, now let us attempt the dissolution of another. Unknown individuals, even if they be ghosts, are seeking something on the mountain, and have only been searching a short time. What could they seek? Game? Absurd. Valuable ores? The geological survey shows that to be impossible. Buried treasure? The only possible theory, gentlemen.

"Now I wish to ask you men who have lived here many years, whether there have ever been any stories of robbers in these hills, of misers' hoards, or of buried gold?"

No one had ever heard of any such thing.

"If there *is* buried treasure on my place, anybody is welcome to it without sneaking around at night to get it away," said the senator angrily.

Rand thought deeply for a few minutes, then, turning to the shelves, took down a county history there. He studied the index, found something there, and in a moment he shut the book with a slap and whirled about.

"Now for our plans; Tom, take what

rest you need and prepare to go on the mountain again. If either Mr. Duncan or I could do as well as you we would go instead. We will rest in our little campaign until such time as you are ready, for you are the vanguard of this movement. Dunk, I want you to run down to New York and get five military flash-lanterns used for night signaling. I, for my part, have some inquiries to make here."

We dispersed after he had thanked the men for their information, and I hurried to the station. When I returned it was late in the afternoon, and Tom Rahway, talking earnestly with Rand, was just coming down the side steps.

"Hello, Dunk!" was Rand's greeting. "Get one of your lanterns ready for Tom. Here, let me see the color of their light. Oh, either light blue, yellow, or red, that is good. Much better than one color. Now, Duncan, I want you to fix one of these lights ten feet above ground in the center of the burned plateau, and turn it toward the mountainside, showing blue. Fix another one, showing yellow, to a pointed iron rod four feet long, and then watch for the white light to-night. Immediately that you see it, get the blue light exactly in line with the white light and your eye, and stick down your iron rod.

"Tom and I, by traveling along the mountainside to get the blue and yellow lights in line, will come pretty near-by meeting each other locating the white light. Then we shall see what happens. Any rapid showing of the red light, either by Tom or myself, is an alarm-signal. If you see it act quickly. Suppose you have Hillis, Michaels, and the gamekeepers on the burned plateau at nine o'clock? Instruct Michaels how to change the light to mark a second showing of the white light, and immediately after you have made the first alignment, then you set out for the mountainside, guiding yourself by your own alignment. Tom is going on the mountain at once. I will stay with you on the plateau until eight o'clock."

Luckily Michaels went out with me when I took my station, or this story might have ended differently. I had instructed him how to make the alignment, and Rand and I were just lighting cigars, when Rand and Michaels both cried out. I whirled around. On the same southerly shoulder where I had fixed it with the range-finder gleamed the strange, small white light. I drove the iron rod of the marking lantern home. Rand and I were already striking off across the burned turf to make a straight ascent when Michaels called after us:

"There's trouble up there. Your Indian is flashing his red light."

We looked. Just then something seemed to dash the red light into darkness.

"Blow your hunting-whistle to call the men from the house. Tell them to hurry, and you stand by the lanterns half an hour, then follow," Rand called back as we ran.

On we went, desperately fighting our way up the slope, now faintly lit by the rising moon. At each resting-place we looked back to be sure we were in the right line with the lanterns. Once we saw them moved, and rejoiced that they meant the white light had flashed nearer to us than at first. In twenty more minutes we were on a side hill among the roughest boulder formation, and were going as quietly as possible, for we must be very close to where the light was last seen.

Unexpectedly it flashed into our very faces from a clump of rocks behind a thicket not fifty feet ahead of us.

A volley of oaths followed.

"Why can't you hold that light stiddy, anyhow, you young pup?" growled a rough voice.

"Light shown by careless holding. I thought so," said Rand. "It's a twenty or thirty-candle power electric lantern, with a portable battery."

The ringing sound of a falling crowbar went echoing along the ridges. Another volley of oaths!

"If you make any more noise, Bud, old man Hillis and all his gamekeeps will be up here."

Slowly we crept up to the thicket and stealthily circled it to a big rock, around the corner of which we peered upon a group of six men not ten feet away. Five were busy delving among the loose boulders; the sixth was holding the light.

"Old Jesse Coombs, his three boys, and two cousins," whispered Rand.

I recalled that the Coombs family was the one living in the hut two miles south of Wanaque Glen.

There was a groan from the gloom behind them.

"Say, Jesse, shall I give that sneakin' varmint another rap on the head? He's comin' around ag'in."

The youth, holding the light, threw it for a second on the bleeding figure of Tom Rahway, hanging stunned in the loops of the rope that bound him to a young oak.

"No, dang ye, ye oughtna teched him in first place. *Now* we gotta keep him up here tell we kin find old Smith's dough."

"This will never do. Tom's hurt," said Rand. "Pull your gun and come on."

We stepped around the rock, covering the group with our Lugers.

"Gentlemen," said Rand, in his hard, cold way, "if you are looking for the box of guineas that bold robber, Klopper Smith, left in these hills last century, Senator Hillis says you may come here in *daylight* and take it if you can find it. I shall have to ask you to stop work, leave your tools, and carry the man you have hurt down to Wanaque Glen. Come on, I say."

With some demur they did as bidden, and the bulking Ira Coombs went in front, lighting the way with the small, white ray that had caused all the trouble.

ONE MOMENT OF DOUBT

SUPPOSE you should forget,
After our love and tears,
To wait for me in that shining place
That lies behind the years!

Suppose I should forget,
After my lips are dumb,
To go to you, O heart of my heart—
Suppose I should not come!

Never yet was a soul,
The past remembering,
But who, one moment in the dark,
Doubted the coming Spring.

And never yet was one
Who on this earth has trod,
But for one instant told his heart
He doubted even God.

Wherefore then blame me, Love,
That, mortal that I be,
I stand one moment, lost, dismayed—
Then face eternity!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE ROCKET

By Arthur Alden Knipe

HIS name was Harvey Draper, and, for his further identification, he was the only son of Colonel Davenport Draper, commodore of the Saugatuck Yacht Club. But no one except his mother ever thought of calling him Harvey. To his many friends he was just "The Skipper," and he owned and sailed the *Flying Spray,* an unregistered craft of fractional tonnage, built with a round, melon-shaped bottom, a small cockpit, and a centerboard. She was rigged with one fair-sized fore-and-aft sail; and knowing ones said she was a "sneak-box."

Nevertheless, not one of the many boats that tied up to the club dock, from the racing schooner-yachts down to the jaunty thirty-footers, were so well cared for as the *Flying Spray,* and her skipper did all the work himself. For the little boat had come to him as a direct gift from his sister Dorothy, and it was on this account as much as anything else that the Skipper lavished ceaseless care upon it. Summer after summer these two had been inseparable companions. The boy adored his big sister, who had taught him to sail the *Flying Spray;* and when, the year before, she had presented him with the little sneak-box his joy knew no bounds.

But Dorothy was ten years older than the Skipper, who was "going on nine"; and, to the boy's intense disgust and disappointment, he found his playfellow suddenly transformed into a young lady, and his calculations for this season were completely upset. During the winter there had been a coming-out function of some sort, followed by many gaieties, in which the Skipper took but little interest; and not until the vacation came did he realize the significance of the change; for Dorothy, instead of coming down to the big house on the hill overlooking the Sound, went off to Newport with her mother, leaving him with the commodore. Thus the Skipper found himself possessed of the *Flying Spray* "for his very own"; but, alas! there was no Dorothy.

Nor was this his only disappointment, for big Bob Brooks had also deserted him for the ephemeral pleasures of Newport. Now it was Bob Brooks who, years before, had taught Dorothy to sail a boat, and the three had been close associates since the boy could remember; so, with both his particular chums away, he was left alone, and very disconsolate.

About the middle of August, Dorothy, radiant, charming, and beautiful, returned; and the Skipper, overjoyed to see her, began to hope for a resumption of the old days they had spent together. But his sister seemed to have given up all interest in small boats. Occasionally she would grace a party on one of the large steam-yachts that were gathering in the Sound for the final races; but her previous love for sailing seemed to have been converted into an unreasoning enthusiasm for automobiles. Bob also came back; but he, too, appeared interested only in a red touring-car, which he drove recklessly, helter-skelter, over the country whenever he could induce Dorothy to accompany him. Then there were many other young men who followed his sis-

ter about; and the Skipper looked on from afar, and wondered.

Everything was changed, and most of all his adored sister. She had never liked automobiles. He remembered how only last season she had said she hated them because "they were so smelly and dusty," and not to be compared to boats. But in particular, her recently acquired habit of wearing veils and gloves whenever she stirred from the house seemed most extraordinary and degrading to the Skipper. It was hard to believe that Dorothy would ever consent to be hampered by such wholly useless and effete gear.

He could recall her own words of scorn when, in former times, they had happened upon a timid party of girls out sailing. How she would say contemptuous and pitying things about the care they took of their complexions. How all three laughed among themselves about the "hotel girls," as she called them; and he and Bob would nod to each other as if to say, "Our captain isn't that sort!"

For Dorothy was always "the captain" on any of their expeditions. He could see her handling the tiller of the *Flying Spray*, or Bob's thirty-foot racer, the *Rocket*, her brown arms bare to the elbows, her tanned face unshaded by any kind of hat, and her fair hair flying in a shimmering halo about her head. And now *she* wore a veil and gloves!

Sometimes, as he scrubbed the deck of the *Flying Spray*, he talked to himself of the matter in an undertone; and one day after he had puzzled over it for the hundredth time he spoke aloud, quite unconscious of the big man who stood on the dock looking down at him.

"She isn't at all like she used to be," he said, in conclusion.

"You're quite right, Skipper, she isn't!" said the man, nodding solemnly.

The boy glanced up, and a smile of delight came over his face.

"Oh, Bob!" he exclaimed, and then, noting the serious expression of the other, he checked any further words of joy.

"Like to take a sail?" he asked a moment later.

Bob appeared to be entirely absorbed in his own gloomy thoughts and wholly indifferent to his surroundings, but the Skipper waited patiently, and finally the big man climbed into the boat.

"Believe I would like a sail," he muttered; and, seating himself as far forward in the little cockpit as he could get, crowded his long legs against the centerboard box, looking very miserable and unhappy.

From then on, however, the Skipper was not left alone. Bob Brooks gave up his automobile and devoted himself to preparing the *Rocket* for the coming Club Cup race. Every day the two were out in the fast little thirty-footer; and no pains were spared to put her in the best possible shape for the coming contest. But Bob was not the cheerful, happy companion of other summers. He and the Skipper did their sailing mostly in silence, the boy forward tending the jib-sheets, the man aft at the tiller.

Occasionally Bob made remarks that puzzled the Skipper. There was only one race in which the *Rocket* was entered—that for the Club Cup—but Bob spoke frequently as if there were two.

"We'll win one of 'em, anyhow!" he said on more than one occasion; and the Skipper answered, "Sure!" though he hadn't an idea of what other race his companion referred to. But he discovered that any reference to Dorothy immediately increased Bob's gloom. Once he had referred to the races of past seasons, when Dorothy was captain, and how they had raced the *Rocket* to victory. Bob grunted some unintelligible answer, and never spoke another word that day. Again the Skipper asked Bob whether he thought Dorothy would sail in the race if she were asked, to which Bob replied with an emphatic: "No!"

"But she might," persisted the Skipper.

"I asked her, and she won't!" growled the other, and relapsed into sullen silence.

So the Skipper, always busy with the

jib-sheets, pondered the matter, and decided that Dorothy was the chief source of Bob's gloom; that there was something amiss between these chums of his; and, finally, he concluded that if he could manage to bring them together for a sail again, everything might move along on the old footing. And to that end he planned, pleading with Dorothy whenever the opportunity offered, but instinctively keeping Bob in the background.

At length, because she was very fond of him, Dorothy consented.

"Haven't you a birthday soon?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered eagerly.

"Well, then," she went on, "I'll devote the whole of your birthday to you, no matter what may turn up, and you can begin to plan what we'll do."

The Skipper, who was not, as a rule, given to undue demonstrations of affection, suddenly put his arms about her neck and kissed her.

"Is it a promise?" he asked, a little breathlessly.

"Yes, it's a promise, Skipper," she said, and the boy ran to the dock to tell the good news to his next-best friend.

"And when is your birthday?" asked Bob, who evinced a keen interest.

"The twenty-fifth of August," said the boy.

"The twenty-fifth!" exclaimed Bob. "Why, that's the day of the race!"

"Yes, that's what makes it so dandy!" the Skipper went on. "Dorothy said she'd do anything I wanted her to, so we'll have the captain with us like we used to have, and—and we can't lose the race!"

"Did Dorothy know the race came on your birthday?" asked Bob.

"Well, no, I don't believe she remembered," the Skipper confessed. "Though she might have," he added hopefully.

Bob went over the situation in his mind, while the boy looked up at him anxiously.

"Skipper, she won't do it!" Bob announced, shaking his head.

"But she promised!" the boy declared.

"Yes, I know; but she wasn't counting on its being the day of the race—and that makes all the difference," returned Bob.

"But she promised," the Skipper reiterated, with becoming loyalty. "Dorothy never goes back on a promise, and she said 'specially she'd do anything I wanted her to."

"All the same, you won't be able to get her in the same boat with me on that particular day," Bob declared.

The Skipper lifted a troubled face to the big man.

"Is it on account of that other race you've talked about?" he asked.

"Yes, that's it, Skipper," said Bob mournfully.

"But I don't understand about that. I wish you'd explain," said the perplexed Skipper.

"You'll understand well enough when you get a little older," Bob told him; and the Skipper had to be content with that. However, the boy returned to his original contention that Dorothy would hold to her promise, and no words of Bob could shake his faith.

And the Skipper noticed that, in spite of the other's pessimism, there was a decided change in his spirits, for, much to the boy's delight, he actually whistled and laughed, much like the chum of past seasons. Still, Bob had sown a seed of doubt in the Skipper's mind, so at the first chance he determined to settle the matter definitely.

He found Dorothy alone one morning directly after breakfast.

"You remember you promised to do anything I wanted you to on my birthday?" he began.

"Yes, dear," she answered readily; "and I'm looking forward to a fine time. Have you made your plans?"

"I suppose you knew that the club regatta came on that day?" he asked; but went on without waiting for an answer. "Well, we're going to sail in the *Rocket*, like we always have, and you'll be captain like you used to be, and—and we can't help beating the *Velox*, even if Tracy Harris does sail her. Beside, I don't think he can sail as well as Bob and——"

He stopped abruptly, seeing that his sister had no liking for his plans.

"Did Bob Brooks put you up to this?" she asked severely.

"No, he didn't!" the Skipper answered. "He said you wouldn't do it when you found out; but I said I knew you would, because you'd promised."

"Are you sure Bob wants me in the boat?" she asked, knowing all the while that it was a silly question.

"Sure!" said the Skipper. "He said we couldn't lose with the captain aboard."

"Indeed!" said Dorothy scornfully. "I suppose he was glad to hear I had made such a rash promise?"

"Awfully!" exclaimed the Skipper, with enthusiasm. "After he came back from Newport he was so grumpy you wouldn't have known him; but ever since I told him you were going to sail with us, he's been cheered up so much you'd be surprised, though he insisted you wouldn't go."

"Did he tell you why I wouldn't?" she asked.

"He said it was on account of another race, but that I wouldn't understand till I was older. Do you understand, Dorothy?" And the Skipper looked pleadingly at his sister.

Undoubtedly Dorothy did understand, and could have answered his question with authority, but she avoided it as she had upon other occasions. As a matter of fact, there were many well-meaning people who could have told the Skipper that there had been a race in progress all summer between big Bob Brooks and one Tracy Harris for the permanent affections of his sister Dorothy.

It was Tracy Harris who had brought his thirty-foot racing-yacht *Velox* all the way from Newport expressly for the purpose of beating the *Rocket;* and there was a very general belief that the winner of the coming regatta would carry off not only the Club Cup, but the commodore's daughter as well; and, although this was pure speculation, it increased the interest in the race a hundredfold.

Dorothy, therefore, would be placed in an extremely awkward position if the Skipper held her to her promise. Her presence in one of the competing boats would be interpreted to mean only one thing, and she was not ready as yet to determine the matter.

Also she was distinctly resentful toward Bob, who she felt had made it well-nigh impossible for her to withdraw her pledge by predicting so positively that she would.

"Skipper," she began at length, "I've made other plans for the regatta—but a promise is a promise, and, if you have made up your mind that you want me to sail in the *Rocket* with you—well, I'll do it, of course, but I warn you that you may be sorry. Don't you think you'd better make it some other day, under the circumstances?"

"Bob said you'd try to get out of it," demurred the Skipper mournfully.

"Well, he was mistaken this time," she answered, with a little toss of her head. "I'll be on hand to sail with you in the race, if you still want me to; but, if I go, don't you be surprised if the *Velox* beats the *Rocket.*"

Early in the morning of the day of the race Bob and the Skipper were busy putting the final touches on their boat. A stiff south wind was blowing, and both were in the best of spirits.

"It couldn't be better, Skipper!" said Bob cheerfully. "It couldn't be better. The *Velox* might have beaten us in a drifting-match, but in this breeze she won't be in it."

"Fine!" rejoined the Skipper, straightening up over a coil of rope, and sniffing with a highly professional air. "It's going to come heavier before we're done," he added.

Bob took a look at the sky, and nodded affirmatively.

"It couldn't be better," he repeated; "and with the captain along—why, we can't lose, Skipper, my boy!"

"I didn't altogether like what Dorothy said about the *Velox* beating us if she went," the boy remarked.

"Don't you worry about that," Bob assured him. "The *Velox* can't win today. I'll admit she's fast in light airs, but she isn't stiff enough for a real

blow; and that mainsail Tracy Harris has on her will give him more trouble than he bargains for. I don't want to brag about the *Rocket*, but if she doesn't run away from the *Velox*, I'll chop her up for kindling-wood. But it will be a wet race, Skipper; as wet as sop, so you can make up your mind to a soaking."

"Humph!" sniffed the Skipper. "It wouldn't seem like a race if you came in with a dry boat."

"You're sure the captain will be here?" Bob asked for perhaps the twentieth time that morning.

"Sure!" said the Skipper. "She promised."

And Dorothy did come at length, though she kept them waiting until the last minute. Bob and the Skipper, in wide-eyed amazement, watched her come tripping down the dock; for she was dressed in the gauziest of white summer gowns, veiled and gloved, and carrying a parasol; the very epitome of daintiness. Bob's heart fluttered for a moment in sheer admiration, then it sank like a stone. A more inappropriate costume to wear on board a boat during a race it would be hard to imagine.

"You're not going out in those things, are you?" exclaimed the Skipper, making no effort to hide his consternation.

"Why, yes; of course," she laughed back at him. "Don't you like my frock? I had it made especially for this race."

"But—but—you'll get all wet!" the Skipper stammered.

"Then perhaps I'd better not go," she returned quickly. "I mustn't get wet, you know. It would break my heart to spoil this dress the first time I had it on. You like it, don't you?" she added, turning to Bob.

"You know perfectly well——" Bob began.

"Oh, I see you *don't* like it," she interrupted. "Perhaps, then, you could persuade the Skipper to release me from my promise?"

"No," he answered promptly, although he realized his dilemma. "No, I don't think I could persuade him."

"Hadn't you better try?" she suggested significantly.

"No, I don't think it's worth while," he returned.

Dorothy hesitated for a moment, and then, without another word, stepped aboard the *Rocket*, and, seating herself well forward, turned her back on the man at the tiller, and holding her little parasol vauntingly over her head, looked out at the tumbling waters.

Bob was not very sure just what Dorothy's intentions had been. She might, he thought, have been counting on his pleading with the Skipper to let her off from her promise, because she knew as well as he did that he could not race his boat in the wind that was blowing without soaking her and ruining her costume. But he, not unnaturally, went further than that, and, for the time at least, accused her in his heart of deliberately planning to defeat him in the race with Tracy Harris, knowing that, under the existing conditions, the *Rocket* was a faster boat than the *Velox*.

To do her justice, Dorothy had not anticipated that Bob would—very stubbornly, she thought—insist upon her going, and had expected that, rather than lose the race, he would prevail upon the Skipper to postpone their day together. She had no desire that Bob should lose any more than she was anxious for Harris to win. She was prepared to be entirely neutral as far as the men were concerned, but, now that her design had miscarried, she hardly knew what to do.

The instant the *Rocket* left the shelter of the dock, and the wind struck her sail with full force, Bob was compelled to ease his sheet, and to keep luffing constantly in order to save the girl from a thorough drenching; and all three in the boat knew that such tactics made the race a farce as far as the *Rocket* was concerned. They steered a zigzag course to the committee-launch, and a little later crossed the starting-line, the last of the six boats entered, and the race began.

Dorothy maintained her position as far forward as she could get, looking straight before her. The Skipper, at his post by the jib-sheets, glanced down at

her now and then disconsolately; and Bob, behind them at the tiller, watched every oncoming wave anxiously, sailing with extreme caution; interested only in Dorothy's comfort and fearful that a drop of spray might injure her dainty costume.

The race called for two trips around a triangular course; the first leg to windward, the second with sheets started, and the last a free run before the wind.

From the start the *Velox* demonstrated her worth, and rounded the first buoy well in advance of the others, the *Rocket* trailing far behind, with her chances of winning decreasing every moment.

On the second leg there was less danger of taking in water, and Bob drove his boat to the utmost, passing one after another of the fleet little yachts, and showing something of what the *Rocket* was capable of before the end of the first lap; but the *Velox* sped on far ahead, although she lost something of her gain on the windward run.

It was quite plain that, if the same tactics were pursued on the second journey about the triangle, the *Rocket* was hopelessly beaten—and it was extremely doubtful whether, under any circumstances, she could overcome the lead the *Velox* had already gained.

As they approached the finish-line of the first round, Dorothy began to manifest signs of restlessness.

"I thought this was to be a race," she said to the Skipper, but quite loudly enough for Bob to hear.

"Why, we can't sail her—if you sit up here—and, beside, you know that as well as anybody."

The Skipper jerked out his words impatiently. The race was lost, to his thinking, and the cause was obvious.

"Then you think I'd better move aft?" said Dorothy.

"That would be better," said the Skipper; "but even then we can't get any speed out of her going into this wind without getting wet."

Dorothy changed her position, and seated herself near Bob in the stern.

"The *Rocket* is all right," she announced to no one in particular; "but I think she's badly sailed."

"You're quite right!" answered Bob shortly.

"Well, something must be done if we are to win this race, and—I don't propose to sit quietly in a losing boat," she exclaimed, at the same time taking the pins out of her huge picture hat.

"Here, Skipper, stow this forward!" she commanded. "Isn't there an extra slicker aboard here?"

The boy brought out an old oilskin coat, and put it about her shoulders. Dorothy rose to her feet, and suddenly sat down again, her little, high-heeled shoes slipping on the slanting deck. She looked helplessly about her for a moment, and then with much determination called again to her brother.

"Skipper, take off those sneakers and give them to me. You can go barefoot for the rest of this voyage, but I can't stand in these French things."

And forthwith she proceeded to take off her own shoes, while the Skipper handed her his rubber-soled slippers with alacrity. At length she stood up and looked about her with lively interest.

Bob gazed at her dubiously. "That slicker won't save your dress," he said.

"Never you mind my dress," she retorted. "All you have to do is to steer. The Skipper and I will take care of the sheets. You drive her for all she's worth. She never lost a race yet, and—and we must win the Club Cup, you know."

"I'm afraid it's too late," said Bob.

"It's never too late!" she protested; and the next minute they had rounded the buoy, and she, with the Skipper's help, had the mainsail trimmed flat in no time.

From the moment Dorothy put on Bob's old coat her whole manner changed. At once her extreme eagerness to win the race was apparent. She looked ahead at the *Velox*, and gave little exclamations of delight as she noted the steady decrease in the distance between the two boats.

"We're gaining!" she kept repeating; and Bob nodded in silence.

And all the while the wind was increasing, and the little boat was drenched from bow to stern as Bob forced her through the big seas. The Skipper, stationed forward, was wet to the skin, but he was used to that, and gloried in it, ducking his head as the waves struck. Dorothy was dripping water from every seam of her coat, and her hair was soaked, but her old love for the water had revived, and she forgot everything but the joy of sailing.

There was not much talking between them as the race progressed. The boy had hardly said a word the entire time, simply waiting patiently for orders, as he conceived a crew should wait.

As they turned into the second leg, it was at once apparent that the wind had shifted somewhat, and was now coming well abaft the beam. In consequence of this, the turning of the last buoy before the final run home became a problem in seamanship. Either the boat must "come about" to get her sail on the other side, or else jibe. The former safe method involved a considerable loss of time; while the latter plan, although saving precious minutes, risked, in any considerable wind, a complete wrecking of the boat.

There was almost a gale blowing by this time; and, as the *Velox* came up to the buoy, Tracy Harris prudently brought her about. Dorothy, who was watching from the *Rocket,* clapped her hands with delight.

"We've got them beaten!" she exclaimed. "We only needed that to catch her on this last leg."

"I don't see it," said Bob shortly.

"Why, we'll gain it by jibing," she answered.

"In this wind? Well, I guess not!" he returned.

She looked at him in sheer amazement.

"You mean you won't jibe?" she asked, her brows lifted in surprise.

"Certainly not!" said Bob positively.

"Are you afraid?" she asked scornfully.

"You know I'm not afraid—for myself," he replied, looking at her reproachfully.

"Well, are you afraid of the boat?" she went on.

"No!" he answered shortly. "Though it's likely to take the mast out of her."

"It's your only chance to win the race," she declared positively.

"Which race?" he asked significantly.

"Either!" she retorted, making no attempt to hide the fact that she understood his meaning.

For a moment he hesitated, looking up at the sails, at the lowering sky, at the rough sea that was hissing about them, and then shook his head.

"I don't dare, Dorothy," he said at length.

"Why don't you dare?" she asked angrily. "You'd have done it fast enough last year!"

"Yes," he answered. "Yes, last year I would; but I didn't know how much I loved you last year. As it is, I wouldn't have anything happen to you for all the races in the world."

"Oh, then it's on my account?" she returned scornfully.

"Why, of course it is!" he answered, so frankly that the girl had no ready reply.

They were nearing the buoy, and Dorothy saw the *Velox* speeding ahead on her last run home.

"Bob, we must win. It would break my heart to lose now, and—and it's our only chance," she pleaded.

Again Bob shook his head, and Dorothy changed her tactics once more.

"Who is in command of this boat?" she demanded abruptly; and both Bob and the Skipper knew she was referring to the old days, when she was always the recognized captain.

"Why, you are," answered Bob.

"Sure!" agreed the Skipper.

"Then if I'm captain, we'll jibe around this next buoy!" she announced, and looked Bob straight in the eyes. Brooks turned helplessly to the Skipper, then he gazed out once more at the tumbling waters. He knew the risk that they would run in attempting to jibe the mainsail in the wind that was blowing, and he feared the result of an attempt.

"Well, am I captain?" Dorothy demanded again, in no uncertain tone.

For another instant he hesitated, then with a shrug he answered:

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Dorothy flushed, but she took command at once.

"Come aft, Skipper, and coil this sheet carefully as I haul in. Bob, you stand by to ease her off as gently as you can, and we'll let the sheet run to the limit. Don't bother with the jibs, and wait till I give the word."

She glanced at Bob for an instant, as if to beg forgiveness for her wilfulness, and added: "We must win, Bob!"

As they approached the buoy she and the Skipper hauled in the main sheet; and when the time came she gave the word. Bob put the helm up, and in a moment the roar about them was deafening. The mainsail hung shivering and flapping above their bowed heads, and then went flying out over the water, the sheet screaming in the blocks, the jaws of the boom thundering against the mast, and shaking the little craft from stem to stern; the traveler rattled along the iron, and the boom, rising threateningly, as if to hug the mast, flopped back into place with a jerk.

For an instant the *Rocket* hung to leeward, while all three scrambled to the weather-side, and held their breaths. But only for a moment she held; then, shaking herself free of the seas curling over her sides, she found her keel, and spurted for home before an ever-increasing wind.

With a sigh Dorothy sank to a place beside Bob. There was little for the crew to do now but sit and wait for the *Rocket* to prove herself equal to the task set for her. They tore along, the little thirty-footer yawing threateningly in the heavy seas, her bow at times almost buried, and a heavy swell following her eagerly. Little by little she crept up on the *Velox*, until at length those on the *Rocket* could make out the faces of those in the boat ahead; and all the time they were approaching the red buoy, which, with the committee's yacht, marked the finish-line. Closer and closer the *Rocket* drew up until the nerves of those in both the racers became tense. Soon they were within speaking-distance of each other, but there was no word of greeting.

"Oh, *can* we do it?" murmured the Skipper.

"We must do it!" said Dorothy; and Bob shut his lips together and kept his eyes ahead.

A little later Dorothy asked:

"Can we blanket them in time?"

"I think so," Bob returned; but he never took his gaze from the stern of the other boat.

At last the cheers of the spectators came across the tumbling waters. They could see the eager faces of the judges on the committee-boat; could pick out the sturdy commodore leaning over the bridge rail, the whistle-cord in his hand, waiting to blow a blast telling of the finish; could distinguish the timers, watches in hand; and on the many vessels clustered about, a flutter of flags and handkerchiefs showed the excitement the closeness of the race was causing.

Both boats were within fifty yards of the finish, when suddenly, without warning, the big mainsail of the *Velox* fluttered. For a moment she seemed to stop dead, and in that short space the *Rocket* forged ahead, and a second later crossed the line.

Dorothy, wet, disheveled, and with her hair blowing about wildly, ran to the bow and waved to the cheering people.

"We've won!" she called above the hubbub about her.

Bob trimmed the sheet and headed the *Rocket* away from the crowd of yachts clustered about them. Then he turned the tiller over to the Skipper.

As the boy came aft, he shouted: "We've won, Bob; we've won!" but the big man neither smiled nor answered. He went forward and, standing beside Dorothy, looked down at her with questioning eyes.

"We won, after all, Bob," she said.

"It is the other race I want settled," he said, a little fiercely, for he was worn with the strain of the contest and the anxiety he felt.

"Was there another race?" she asked, lowering her eyes.

"You know there was, Dorothy. You know it was a race between me and Tracy Harris for you. And—and he couldn't love you more than I do."

For a few moments she was silent, looking straight before her across the sparkling waters of the Sound.

"Bob," she began, so softly that he was forced to lean down to hear; "Bob, you won that—that other race, as you call it, when—I took command; but—it wasn't really a race, Bob."

Without a thought of the proprieties he took her in his arms, wet and bedraggled as she was, and kissed her; then, guiltily, they both turned and looked at the Skipper.

There he stood stolidly in the stern, his sturdy little back braced against the tiller, and his eyes fixed on the leech of the sail—where good yachtsmen always keep their eyes.



A SUMMER'S SUMMARY

I HAVE day-dreams in prose and in verse,
Of poems and stories and plays.
I enjoy both the better and worse,
And with fancies my mind is ablaze.
They float in a magical haze,
They bewilder me, dazzle and stun,
Till my intellect clogs in a daze
And I never get anything done.

I think of a sword or a purse,
A plot sprouts and grows to a maze,
A tale of a sorcerer's curse,
Or of chances and journeys and frays,
Or of lovers, or sultans and beys,
Of a lost and identified son;
And the plots are all worthy of praise,
But I never get anything done.

My imaginings coddle and nurse
Each telling or lyrical phrase,
Expressions delightful or terse,
Words set in unusual ways.
'Tis the thirst for perfection that preys
On the drama or song I have spun;
So I meditate, write, and erase,
But I never get anything done.

My muse, you permit me to laze,
And my harvest is small, or there's none.
I gloat over exquisite days,
But I never get anything done.

EDWARD LUCAS WHITE.

The Tramp Flower

By Maude E. Smith Hymers

BETTY grew within a garden,
Long ago.
Tended by old-fashioned fingers,
Trained just so!
Fairest of the flowers they thought her,
Lovers for their ladies sought her,
And for love and money bought her,
Lady Bet.

Fair and fine was pretty Betty,
Long ago;
In her perfumed gown of lacework,
Made for show.
Freshest dews from heaven kissed her,
Ne'er a balmy zephyr missed her,
Sunbeams hastened to assist her,
Dainty Bet.

But their fickle fancies wavered,
Long ago,
And a rival flower won them,
Ah, the woe!
Fashion's cruel whim dethroned her,
Robbed her of the prestige loaned her;
Old-time friends in vain bemoaned her,
Pretty Bet.

Thrust from out her native garden,
Long ago,
Betty crept upon the highway,
There to grow.
Now she nods from every corner,
Wildness has of beauty shorn her,
Till the passing children scorn her,
Gipsy Bet.

She that was so fine and dainty,
Long ago;
Tended by old-fashioned fingers,
Trained just so!
Grazing kine have tramped and maimed her,
Long neglect has paled and shamed her,
And the vulgar youth have named her
Bouncing Bet.

A RECONCILIATION

By Caroline Duer

THE time was summer, the place New York, and the principal character one Mr. John Maxwell, a very much depressed and discontented young man.

After a lonely dinner at the club he had returned to the apartment usually occupied by his mother and himself, and was now lounging in a big armchair drawn close to the window, gloomily contemplating the noisy, electric-lighted avenue, and wishing himself almost anywhere else.

He had, on the whole, just cause for irritation both of body and mind, for the weather was suffocatingly hot, and the client whose business detained him in town particularly exasperating. Moreover, he had quarreled with the girl whom he proposed to marry, and in a word, or, rather, in his own words—addressed partly to himself and partly to the caretaker's cat, who all unbidden was bearing him company—he was "up against it."

"Up against it, old man," he observed, "and no mistake. She and I are both cursed with firm dispositions. She said I had an obstinate upper lip, besides. Perhaps I have." Here he stroked it with a pride that had yet a touch of chagrin in it. "Anyhow, I can't take the first step back. I *can't*. Something inside won't let me. And if *I* can't, and *she* won't—well, you see, Thomas, there's the deuce to pay."

The cat—who was not that kind of a cat at all, but the respectable mother of several large families of kittens—looked at him disdainfully, and curled the tip of her tail demurely about her toes.

"After all," broke out the young man, suddenly impressed with the fact that his lady-love's conduct showed, in its outward and visible signs, a distinct lack of inward and spiritual grace; "after all, it's a woman's *place* to give way; to admit that she's in the wrong, to 'kneel for peace,' as Shakespeare says in 'The Taming of the Shrew.' Not that Linda's a shrew, but the quotation is applicable just the same. I've been to school to a fairly large number of women, either singly or in groups," continued Mr. Maxwell, with befitting modesty; "and my judgment suggests to me that if a girl's heart isn't big enough to make her humble when she's in love—why, she's not got the right kind of a heart, or she's not in love! Well, I've done my best. The quarrel was none of my making. I've told her I'd come back when she sent for me. She hasn't sent for me. I can't do anything more. No self-respecting man could."

He pulled the cat's ears, and she immediately got up and walked away with offended dignity, stopping to yawn and stretch before she disappeared into the hall.

"So you're going, are you?" muttered the deserted one, looking after her. "If that infernal client of mine would only call me up as I directed, I'd go, too—out—off—anywhere to escape from my-

self and my thoughts. There are plenty of distractions to be found, no doubt."

He sighed, and, leaning over toward the table, groped for the match-box, and began to light a cigarette. At that moment the telephone-bell rang, and Mr. Maxwell blew out his match, heaved himself out of his chair, and went to answer it. A gleam of fierce pleasure brightened his eye. He wanted to browbeat somebody, and here was his opportunity. He didn't care if the case were taken out of his hands! When he told a man to call him up at a certain time, it behooved that man to do it! Was he to be kept waiting; kicking his heels in that stifling room for hours to suit the convenience of thundering millionaires? Not much!

"Hello!" he roared, jerking the receiver off its hook.

For an instant he could hear no reply, and so he roared again.

"Hello! This is 3663, Plaza. Who wants it?"

"Oh, I do," answered a soft voice, tremulous, almost inaudible, but to the ear of even outraged affection impossible to mistake. "Is Mr. Maxwell there?"

Mr. Maxwell involuntarily took a step backward. His heart bounded and beat, and he had to swallow twice before he answered.

"Yes, I'm here. How under the sun did you——? What *are* you doing in town?"

"Just passing through," said the voice—and he thought the new quality of meekness he detected well became it—"I'm all alone here, at the house, and it's very dismal, and so am I. I only rang you up on the chance. I couldn't be sure, of course—but I wanted—that is, I thought, perhaps, if you were there—you'd come—if you knew——"

"'Thought perhaps,'" interrupted the young man, grandly sarcastic. "I'll be with you in ten minutes!"

He seized his hat and departed, leaving any subsequent telephonic communications to take care of themselves.

Firm in temper and obstinate as to upper lip he might be, but this unexpected surrender, this charming and sudden laying down of arms on her side, touched him inexpressibly.

"She's a real woman, bless her," he thought, as he swung himself lightly and easily on the passing car; "and women, thank the Lord, can't keep that sort of thing up. It's best for us—and for them, too—that they can't," he further philosophized, paying his fare as if he were bestowing an alms, and beaming upon the conductor as if he had been a long-lost friend. "Of course I must be prepared for a certain amount of haughtiness at first; the reflex action from the weakness she'll think she's been guilty of in yielding—in sending for me. But I'll swear I was on the point of going to her, anyhow, no matter what I'd said, no matter where she was. I believe, upon my soul, it's true! And then——"

Mr. Maxwell's mind lost itself in sentimental imaginings, and he almost forgot to get off at the right street. In spite of the heat he walked rapidly toward the house, and absolutely leaped up the steps. Light streamed through the slanted shutters of the first-floor windows, and the very plump, panting female who answered his vehement ring told him that Miss Stone was in the drawing-room. He saw her maid whisking up-stairs with the tray of a trunk as he pushed aside the thin curtains and entered unannounced.

Linda, in her cool, white gown, was sitting on the sofa, fanning herself slowly with great sweeps of a palm-leaf fan. She looked up when he came in, and then started to her feet, dropped the fan, and ran to him.

"Oh, Jack, is it really you? How I've wanted you!"

Mr. Maxwell eloquently said nothing, and said it very well.

"It is so good of you to come. I don't know what I should have done if you hadn't," she sighed, with her cheek against his shoulder.

There was no haughtiness in this, but the young man felt it none the less expedient to follow the line of diplomacy he had laid out for himself.

"Good of me to come!" he exclaimed. "I've been wanting to come every hour

since you—that is, since I—I, mean since we parted! The only difficulty has been in staying away."

"I felt that, too. I've been on the point of writing again and again. It was just my horrid obstinacy."

"Taking for granted that it lives where you say mine does, I salute you," said Mr. Maxwell quickly, suiting the action to the word.

Miss Stone, laughing and blushing, disengaged herself from his embrace.

They sat down together on the sofa.

"It's like a miracle," she said, "our meeting. I'm on my way to Newport. *I* knew that you might be in town about this time, because your mother mentioned it in a letter to mine; but how did you know *I* was going to be here?"

"I didn't know it till about ten; or, to be quite exact, I should say fifteen minutes ago, when a certain lady"—her expression hardened, and he perceived that he had better, after all, touch lightly upon her surrender—"a certain lady," he continued, "who shall be nameless—we might call her Dame Fate, or Madam Destiny—just breathed into my ear that it might be so. And when I observed the light in your window, and when that blessed old woman opened the door, and when I saw you with my own eyes, I knew that there was nothing else on earth but you, be you never so wickedly obstinate and unfortunately hideous in appearance."

There seemed to be no adequate reply to make to this in words, and for a few minutes Miss Stone attempted none, then she murmured softly:

"I suppose I *am* hideous, if you say so, and I know I'm—determined. I don't see why you love me——"

"I've often wondered myself," put in Mr. Maxwell.

"But you've proved that you do," she went on. "Proved it in the most generous way. I'm ashamed to think how petty I've been. Of course, it's a man's place to be above small things; to show he's large-minded and willing to come more than half-way to save a situation. And it's lucky for us women that men are like that; lucky for us and for them, too, I suppose, or else there'd be more quarrels and fewer reconciliations. But, all the same, I don't think many men—and I've played with a good many from first to last—would have come back as you've come, dear."

"Surely, if they were in love, honestly and heartily in love," cried the young man, beginning to deprecate in words the conduct which her praise was causing him to regard with rapidly increasing admiration.

"Perhaps," she answered; "for, unless a man's love is great enough to make him humble, he's not much of a man, or he's not much in love."

"But I'm both," declared Mr. Maxwell, catching her in his arms. "Acknowledge at once that I'm both."

Linda acknowledged it at once. The young man had never beheld her in so sweet a mood. She contradicted him in nothing. They discussed their affairs exhaustively. They settled the time of their wedding, the details of their projected honeymoon abroad. They did not differ as to the kind of automobile they should buy, or the places they should visit in it. Then Linda insisted that all this travel-talk had made her hungry, and she confessed that she had been too depressed to eat any dinner; and Maxwell sent to the club for some sandwiches and a pint bottle of champagne, and she nibbled and sipped, and he watched her delightedly. The caretaker and Linda's maid—who appeared, equally disheveled by the heat, one from the upper and one from the lower regions—having been summoned, were requested to drink the health of the newly—or perhaps it might be better to say renewedly—engaged couple; and, as the clock struck eleven, and Maxwell, for the third time, started to go, he felt that the weather was Elysian, and New York a paradise sufficiently peopled by one angel. He couldn't help lingering.

"What was it we quarreled about, Linda, dear?" he inquired, from under the shelter of the angel's wing.

"I've almost forgotten, Jack," she whispered. "What does it matter now?"

"Not much now, it's true. But to

think we might have let it come between us; a thing so slight that we can hardly remember the cause of it! Men and women are very stupid to play so with their happiness. It makes me shudder to think what might have happened if you had not sent for me."

"Sent for you!" cried Linda.

"Telephoned for me if your pride requires such accuracy," he answered, with fond mockery.

"I never telephoned."

They separated and stood staring at each other.

"You didn't?"

She shook her head.

"You never called up my apartment; said you wanted Mr. Maxwell; told me you were passing through town; were all alone at the house; wanted to see me; were sure I'd come if I knew? But, my dear girl, you're dreaming. I got the message myself."

"I'm not responsible for it."

"I recognized your voice."

"You could not have. I *wanted* you to come—with all my heart I wanted you to come—till I almost thought you'd *feel* it. But I would not let myself send for you. I was too proud."

"And I wanted to come. The Lord knows I wanted to come. But I would not till you sent for me. I'd rather have died."

"But you're here."

"By mischance. Since you did not send, the last hours are wiped out."

There was a moment's pause.

"You mean that?" she said.

"Yes. The woman I dreamed of would have sent."

"The man *I* dreamed of would not have waited to be sent for."

He shrugged his shoulders. "There seems to be nothing more to say," he suggested.

"Except good night," she agreed, "and good-by."

"Good-by," he responded, adding gently; "if you will have it so."

He touched her hand, turned, and left her.

Vaguely he knew that he had got himself out of the house and was striding as quickly away from it as, a little while before, he had been striding toward it, when he became aware of following footsteps and a breathless voice calling his name.

"I beg your pardon, sir," cried Linda's maid, overtaking him, "but Miss Stone desired me to call your attention to the fact that you'd—left your hat behind you, sir."

The young man put his hand to his head. It was bare.

Then he looked at the maid's hands. They were empty.

"You didn't *bring* me my hat," he observed, smiling into the darkness.

"Miss Stone did not give it to me, sir."

Mr. Maxwell laughed out loud, and returned.

"She'll think I did it on purpose," he said to himself; "and I won't undeceive her till after we're married, and then—she won't believe me. We're reconciled 'for keeps' this time. Bless the telephone that began it!"

What Linda wants to know is: "What saucy female has a voice that Jack could mistake for mine?"

What Jack's client wants to know is: "Why the devil aren't you at home when you say you'll be?"

What Jack knows he's not telling.

IN SELF DEFENCE

By Austin Adams



UT, Great Scott! man, I can't go this way, can I? Just look at me!" groaned Pervis, gazing at the ruins in the mirror.

"Rum, I'll admit," chuckled Monteith. "I admire the color scheme—of the left eye especially."

"But I tell you I can't see with that eye at all, and only half see with the other one!"

"To be able to do that is something."

"My teeth are all loose," announced Pervis, not to be flattered out of realizing the totality of the wreck; and Monteith said nothing.

"Yes, and just look at this lump on my temple, will you? Big as an egg. Purple—be black and yellow to-morrow, and stay so a month!"

Monteith looked at it.

"And I really believe that my nose is broken—cartilage wobbles so. It shouldn't, should it? See if your cartilage wobbles, Tom, will you?"

Monteith grasped his nose, but made no report on his ability to wobble it.

"And my upper lip—sore as the devil, and swollen as big as a sausage! Can't shut my mouth. And just hear how I say 'mouth,' will you?"

Monteith lay back on the bed and roared.

"Oh, it's easy to laugh—idiot! But how'd you like it if your ribs were broken and your scalp was cut and your right ear was pulp and your shoulder felt out of joint and your knuckles were skinned—and you had to go to see your rich old uncle, who never had any use for you before, for the first time in your life? Eh, tell me that! Yes, and chuck your blooming, beastly grinning, can't you, and tell me what's to do."

"Wire," suggested Monteith, "that you're——"

"Wire—nothing!" broke in Pervis. "Please have a look at that!"

He took a letter out of his pocket and tossed it over to Monteith. It proved to be from old Sir Marmaduke's solicitor, and ran:

HADLEY OLD CHAMBERS,
Chancery Lane,
Fleet Street, W. C.
15th August, 190—.

THOMAS PERVIS, ESQ.,
Hotel Cecil,
Strand.

SIR: I am glad to learn that you acted upon my advice and came from Paris at once, as Sir Marmaduke desired. I have advised Sir Marmaduke that you will arrive on the five o'clock train to-morrow—Saturday—and, in view of all that I have told you, I need scarcely say that under no circumstances must you fail to show up. Sir Marmaduke is somewhat peculiar—a word to the wise, etc.—but as he seems disposed to let bygones be bygones—I believe I told you in my last letter that he does not desire any mention to be made of anything relating to the past—it will be greatly to your interest, I am very sure, if you will meet his recent change of mind in a like spirit—and at five o'clock, sharp, to-morrow! Yours truly,

GEOFFREY BEESTON.

"Wire!" sneered Pervis, changing the leech from his left eye to the right. "Wire—after that?"

"No—of course you can't wire. I wasn't onto the ticklish lay of the land," answered Monteith.

"What, then? And do, for Heaven's sake, sit up and quit that infernal grin. It's serious, damn serious, I tell you, Mont!"

Monteith sat up and filled his pipe, afraid to look at Pervis, who continued

to view the ruins and to tickle the already gorged leech to persevere.

"I'll not deceive you, Thomas, my son; your appearance at the present time would not recommend you to your tart old sporting uncle," remarked Monteith.

"Hardly!" grunted Pervis. "Of course you and I know that I could have knocked the everlasting spots out of that little French monkey, if——"

"If he had cherished the orthodox traditions of the manly art and fought according to the Marquis of Queensberry rules."

"Instead of scratching and biting and kicking and clawing like a——"

"A Hungerford fishwife? Precisely! We know how it was, of course; but I really don't think you could get Uncle Marmaduke to see it in the way that we do, do you? England expects every man to do—the other man, you know."

"Quite so; all of which doesn't throw light, does it, on what we can do about it."

"I was coming to that," answered Monteith. "How would it do for me to run down to see Nuncky?—envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, that sort of thing—to explain that you had been unavoidably detained; summoned to Buckingham or Windsor, wherever Eddie happens to be now, to paint a portrait of his nibs, or of the Okkund of Swat, or of anybody who would size up big enough to reconcile Nuncky to a brief delay in taking you to the avuncular heart?"

"By Jove! there's something in that!" exclaimed Pervis, coming over and sitting on the edge of Monteith's bed. "A telegram or letter would be fatal, but your going in person would be different."

"I could size up the situation, you see."

"And lie accordingly."

"Exactly! And lie accordingly, as you say; for it might be expedient to change my lie at the last moment, and instead of saying that you were at Buckingham Palace or Devonshire House, I might find that the only thing that could possibly save you would be to say that you had died suddenly of pneumonia."

"Whereas a letter," Pervis hastened to add, "would have to stick to the same old lie, wouldn't it?"

"Certainly; and you'd have uncle ringing up the palace to see how you were!" chipped in Monteith.

"Yes, or leaving his money to somebody else if I wrote that I was dead!"

"Seriously, though, Perry, old man, I really do believe that the only thing to do now is to have me go to Barston Priory to-morrow, on the train that he expects you; and I can give Sir Marmaduke an impressionist story that will hold him for a while."

And so it was decided. Armed with an assortment of plausible explanations, Monteith, it was arranged, would travel down to the baronet's Bedfordshire seat by the appointed train, and stave off an outbreak of gouty choler, if any threatened. To lessen the shock of disappointment on discovering that not his long-lost nephew, but a total stranger, alighted from the train, it was also decided—not without long and earnest discussion and prayer — that Pervis should write a diplomatic letter, which, if mailed at once, Sir Marmaduke would get the following morning.

Accordingly, Pervis indited the epistle, a model of skilful indirection; and Monteith started out to post it—when he almost ran into Mr. Beeston, the solicitor, and had to erect with incredible rapidity a barricade of lies sufficently high to keep that gentleman from going up to Pervis' room to write a note which he would find "on returning from the Continent to-night."

After piloting the solicitor out of the danger zone, Monteith hurried back to the hotel to advise Pervis of the narrow escape, as well as to caution him not to permit any communications to be sent up from the hotel office. On further consideration it was thought best that Pervis, in order to avoid any possible embarrassment in the shape of untimely visits from either Mr. Beeston or any other of his few London acquaintances, should "remain on the Continent" for a fortnight—that is to say, at some ob-

scure lodgings anywhere out of town; at Ramsgate, for instance, or Brighton.

"And now, my erring one, for the story," said Monteith that night after the little dinner sent up to their rooms. "The sweet, sad story of your past, you know; so that my glittering generalities anent the Life and Times of Thomas Pervis may not conflict too glaringly with the facts as known to Marmy, you know."

"That's so," replied Pervis; "it would be well, wouldn't it, for you to know how to lie artistically about my brief but glorious career out in those beastly States? Well, Tom, it's a simple story. My mother, Sir Marmaduke's only sister, ran away to marry daddy, who was then a struggling young civil engineer, and, of course, an American. Her father, as far as I can learn, a crusty, old, fox-hunting country squire, never forgave her; and later, when Uncle Marmaduke came into the title and tried to bring about a reconciliation with mother, she had died—I never knew mother, you know, for she died soon after I was born—and it seems that daddy wrote one of his scorching letters—I've received several of them, and know what he could do when his journals got hot—and the result was that Sir Marmaduke wrote back and told him that, as far as he was concerned, the whole Pervis connection could go plumb to Hades, and stay there."

"Charming! Sounds like a melodrama. Go on!"

"Well, we never heard from Barston Priory again until the other day, when old Beeston butted in with that staggering letter which I received in Paris on the day after my 'Navajo Pueblo' got the gold medal."

"A miscarriage of justice due solely to the fact that the stupid hanging committee at the Salon skied my much larger canvas, 'Dimsdale's Confession.' But go on. You had reached the place where the long-lost nephew suddenly turns up famous, the envy of all the painters in the world; and the hard-hearted uncle relents and sends for him to come and witness the burning up of the old will and the signing of the new one."

"Dry up, Mont! Beeston doesn't so much as intimate vaguely that Uncle Marmaduke intends to will me anything. What he does say, is that Sir Marmaduke has always had a warm spot in his heart for my poor mother, and that now that poor old dad, too, is gone, and——"

"And you are distinctly 'It'——"

"Shut up! And I am over here in Europe, why, the old boy would like to see me; that's all."

"All of which spells a pretty little scene when the old codger first sees 'the living image' of his sister; a great dinner of the county swells, and a dance of the tenants in the great hall to celebrate the return of the heir presumptive; a solemn, secret conference the next morning in the old Tudor library, when the old family solicitor, who has been summoned post-haste from town, draws up the new will—or there's nothing in the sacred traditions of the stage."

"Rats! And now pack off to bed. I'm dead tired, and every bone in my body aches."

Just on time, the train slowed down for Barston Priory station the next afternoon, and Monteith was on the platform the instant that it stopped. It is to all intents and purposes nothing more than a private station for the almost exclusive convenience of Barston Priory itself, and the four or five other great country-seats in its immediate neighborhood. The platform, therefore, had very few waiting when Monteith looked about for the conveyance which was to meet Pervis. A smart young groom ran forward and touched his hat.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but is it Sir Marmaduke Barston you want, sir?"

Monteith handed him his dress-suit case.

"Thank you, sir! This w'y, sir. Boxes in the luggage van, sir?"

"No. I have no other baggage."

"Thank you, sir! Then this w'y, sir."

He led the way around the station to

a wide, circular drive, where a couple of high-spirited horses, put tandem to an extremely lofty dog-cart, were apparently going through a horse-show rehearsal, the magnificent gray leader being in the act of walking around the ring on his hind legs.

In the cart sat an oddly youngish old gentleman in perfectly fitting black-and-white checks, vivid tan gloves, a puffy, crimson Ascot tie showing above the flowered, corn-colored waistcoat; and a big bunch of violets, matching the bunch tied to the whip, on the left lapel of his coat. His natty fawn derby hat, worn with the least little bit of a list to one side, topped a purple, pugnacious, thoroughbred face, through the veins of which flowed evidence of the antiquity and soundness and bouquet of the port wine and Madeira in the cellars at Barston Priory.

He was tooling the cart with the dexterity of an expert, and seemed not at all alarmed at the eccentricities of the big gray leader. As the cart wheeled by the platform on the next turn of the ring he spied Monteith, and instantly brought the prancing gray down on all fours, and pivoted the vehicle alongside with a trick of the wrist.

"At his head, at his head!" he yelled to the groom, and then in a jiffy he had twisted the lines about the whip, hopped nimbly from his high perch, and ran forward to welcome Monteith with both hands.

"So here you are! Well, well, well! And fit, damme, fit, sir! Why the devil didn't he write that you were a man, and not one of those long-haired artist asses? Don't ever be an ass, Tom, and wear long hair!" chuckled the old boy, as he slapped Monteith on the back and spun him around to look at him.

"It's awfully good of you, Sir Marmaduke, to receive me so kindly, especially since I appreciate how deeply disappointed you must be," replied Monteith, feeling vaguely uncomfortable, but accounting for the old gentleman's embarrassing cordiality by supposing that Pervis must have laid it on rather thick in his letter of introduction; for Pervis had a way of insisting on "Love me, love my dog!" which made a note of introduction from him a passport to the affections of the most casual acquaintance.

"Now you sha'n't mind if I call you Tom, shall you?" rattled on the old man, ignoring Monteith's remarks, and increasing his confusion by jabbing a jocular thumb into his side. "Come, now, it's Tom, isn't it?"

"Why, yes; certainly, sir," stammered Monteith; "only it almost makes me feel as though——"

"'E's very 'ard of 'earin', sir," explained the groom from the seat at Monteith's back, and without turning his head or moving a muscle.

"How long can you stop?" asked Sir Marmaduke, when he had got the leader down to a rhythmic agreement with the steady, aristocratic trot of the high-stepping wheeler.

"Oh, only over Sunday, sir," answered Monteith, "as I must hurry back to meet Tom at—at—at St. Malo, you know, sir."

"Ride to hounds?" asked Sir Marmaduke, taking Monteith's breath away by the suddenness of the tack.

"'E don't never hanswer a question, sir," came illuminatingly from the rear.

"I've had a taste of hunting—with the Meadowbrook hounds, sir, a famous American pack," megaphoned Monteith, thinking it wiser to make the effort to be polite than to rely too confidently on the groom.

"And 'e don't never hexpect no hanswers, either, sir," continued the groom comfortingly, since Sir Marmaduke paid no attention to Monteith's remark.

"And to think that I've allowed Maria to make me make a blithering idiot of myself all these years!" snarled the baronet, very red and peppery; and Monteith was thankful that he never expected an answer.

"If Maria tries any of her nonsensical sentiment games on you, Tom, take my advice and don't pay the slightest attention to anything she says," sputtered the old gentleman, redder and more peppery; and Monteith's thankful-

ness deepened. It would have been so difficult, under all the circumstances, to discuss Maria.

"*I* don't," went on Sir Marmaduke, turning and looking at Monteith in a way that seemed to indicate that this time some sort of answer was expected.

"'E don't hexpect a hanswer heven now, sir; 'e don't really, sir," reached Monteith through the back; and he waived the deal and waited for Sir Marmaduke to suggest the next topic for meditation.

"I do hope," presently began the baronet, "that old Beeston hasn't been filling your head with all sorts of absurd ideas?"

"Oh, no, sir; I never met Mr. Beeston," Monteith was forced into replying by the rising inflection in his host's voice.

"A great ass, Beeston, don't you think?"

Monteith fell back upon the word of the groom, and remained silent.

"Well, here we are!" cried Sir Marmaduke, as the cart whirled through the great gates of the park, a superb specimen of woodland and lawn and gardens, with a rambling, many-chimneyed, ivy-covered Elizabethan house standing at the top of the avenue of beeches, with a long terrace running the full length of the front. "Now you must make yourself at home, Tom, for nobody will make the slightest effort to entertain you. What's your fad, eh? If you go in for golf or tennis or riding or billiards or driving—it's yours for the asking. Swivel, see that Mr. Tom has anything that he likes in the stables, will you?"

"Yes, sir," replied the groom, the tip of his finger on the cockade on his hat.

"And now, Tom, my boy, I'm off till dinner—eight o'clock; and you must browse for yourself," laughed Sir Marmaduke, delighting Monteith by leaving him to get his bearings as best he could.

A gnawing curiosity to learn who Maria might be led him to seek the stables and Swivel.

"Hoh! that's m'lydy, sir; but she's not at 'ome now, sir. Lydy Barston is tykin' the barths at some German waterin'-plyce, sir; rheumatism, sir; somethink hawful, sir."

Monteith found it difficult to regret Lady Barston's absence; and walked slowly back to the house, through whose labyrinth of superb old galleries and wainscoted rooms he soon lost himself in a trance of artistic envy. After examining the beautiful portraits in the long gallery, he drew aside the portières hanging under a heavy, squat Tudor stone arch, and found himself looking into the great library, dim and mellow by reason of the rich painted glass in the high mullioned windows. His eye ran around the low, carved bookshelves until it reached the fireplace, with its great overhanging stone hood, before which, curled up in a huge armchair, a girl sat reading.

Monteith almost stopped breathing; he had never seen anything so beautiful before. With the big folio lying in her lap, and her exquisite chin propped up on her hand, she sat gazing up dreamily at the ceiling, as if trying to let some line that she had just read sink into her heart. The profile was of the high-born, queenly, almost haughty English type; the neck magnificent, the hair a shimmering chestnut, and the shoulders and figure those of some unattained dream of Dante Gabriel Rosetti's. She was young, possibly twenty-three, and Monteith thought that he detected a spirit so innocent and childlike in her that he felt like a profane intruder in some sanctuary, and quickly dropped the curtain and tiptoed back through the gallery and out into the court.

Who was she? Certainly Tom Pervis had never heard of her presence at Barston Priory, or he would have spoken of her—yes, or more likely he would have run any risk of offending Sir Marmaduke rather than send such a chap as Tom Monteith as his substitute! At all events, dinner would reveal the identity of the glorious creature; so Monteith smoked and waited.

Dinner-time arrived at last, but Sir Marmaduke and Monteith dined alone; the vision was nowhere visible. And the worst of it was, that Monteith had

lost all hope of ever being able to get a reply of any sort to any sort of question from Sir Marmaduke; for the old gentleman invariably muttered, "Quite so! Quite so!" and changed the subject.

The monologue at dinner was diverting enough, to be sure, for Monteith found Sir Marmaduke quite the most highly spiced old boy that he had ever met, his talk running glibly on from horses and wine and hunting, to art and letters and travel.

Yes, it was immensely entertaining; but it was a monologue, and the mind of the best listener will wander. Monteith's wandered constantly—to the library and the glorious girl whom he had seen there.

During a momentary absence of the butler, and a lull in Sir Marmaduke's rapid-fire reminiscences, Monteith's curiosity—or was it some other and deeper feeling?—inspired him to make one last desperate attempt to learn who the vision was.

"Might I ask," he bawled at the old man, "who the young lady is whom I saw to-day in the library?"

Sir Marmaduke had screwed up his eyes and held his hand at his ear as Monteith spoke; but he merely said: "Quite so! As I was saying, we had been having no end of bad luck—not a grouse in three days—when Lord Arthur Powis suggested that we——"

To this day Monteith does not exactly know what it was that Lord Arthur Powis suggested, for it took Sir Marmaduke half an hour to finish the story; and then they were through dinner, and went into the little study off the library to smoke.

Monteith observed that the old gentleman's air changed when they had lit their cigars and sat facing each other; also that he rose and went to the door, looked up and down the passage, and shut the door tight before seating himself.

"Now, Tom," he began, "I want to have a perfectly clear understanding with you from the first. I don't mind telling you that I like you. No, damme, I say I like you. So far so good!"

"If he only would buy an ear-trumpet!" thought Monteith, conscious that he really ought to say something—and the utter futility of saying it!

"But while I tell you that I like you," went on the baronet, "I hope you realize that this does not mean that I intend to bequeath you——"

Deaf or not deaf, the old man must be told that he had grossly mistaken his man! Monteith sprang to his feet. If the old cad were twenty years younger he would have to swallow this piece of insufferable British valuation of American ideas of decency and independence!

"What!" he exclaimed. "Why, Sir Marmaduke, Tom Pervis would see you in hell before he would accept a cent from you or any other man, unless he had some claim upon it, and it came to him in a perfectly natural way! Pervis would resent your insinuations; and what do you suppose that I, a total stranger, who am here only to explain your nephew's unfortunate absence, must think of you? With all due respect, sir, to your age and the laws of hospitality, I tell you that I despise and——"

"Bravo!" cried Sir Marmaduke—he had heard not a syllable of Monteith's heroic harangue—clapping his wrinkled hands and dancing forward to pound Monteith on the back. "Bravo! That's the spirit! How I wish that Maria could have witnessed your manly outbreak! I knew the sort of stuff that you are made of, and, damme, I admire your spirit, Tom, damme, and the game way in which you repudiate all idea of inheriting my property. Come, boy, sit down and drink a glass of this excellent old port. So! To the sort of chap who has made America what it is!"

He drained his glass, watching with twinkling little eyes the rapidly returning good nature and generally improved expression on Tom's face.

"There!" went on Sir Marmaduke, smacking his lips. "Since we understand one another so well, I don't mind telling you—old Beeston himself doesn't know this—that aside from the entailed estates, which must, of course, descend to that insufferable young ass, the late

Lord Ashby's eldest son, I possess devisable property to the extent of some two hundred thousand pounds, more or less, not to mention——"

Monteith protested—with his hands—but the baronet was oblivious to anything, spoken or indicated, when a monologue was under full headway; so Monteith had to hear that Pervis had a rather good prospect of coming into a snug little sum one of these days.

"And now that I have told you to your impudent young face, sir, what I shall not do for you," concluded Sir Marmaduke, in great good spirits, "I'll tell you—you young knave!—what I have already done for you. I've said a damn good word for you, Tom, to the finest young woman in the world, sir, who is looking after me here during poor Lady Barston's deplorable absence at some nasty little German spa or other—can't recollect just which one, but it doesn't signify."

Monteith sat up; the monologue had become absorbing; and before he went to bed he had gathered that Gloria Maltravers was an orphan, an heiress in a modest way, a girl of wonderful mind and character, an excellent musician, a "woman with sense, sir, and the best seat in the Barston-Nesby hunt, damme!"

All of which, or, rather, much more than all which, Monteith had guessed during that instant's glimpse of Gloria in the library. It was hard to wait until morning, when, Sir Marmaduke assured him, Gloria would be back from Market Nesby. Long before morning Monteith found himself so nearly in love that he prepared himself for the worst. It came.

By command of Sir Marmaduke, they became Tom and Glory to each other at the very first interview; and by luncheon-time they were old friends. An acquaintance does ripen so much faster when the parties to it have been fully described to one another!

It was at luncheon, moreover, that Monteith began to appreciate the monologue as a means of entertainment—when the monologist is stone-deaf it affords such a delightful excuse and cover for private conversation on the side. And dinner was the same, only more so.

The days that followed were halcyon; and, just when Monteith's conscience began to bother him about having left poor Pervis alone so long, a mysterious private messenger arrived bringing a letter from Pervis himself, in which he sent the glad tidings that Dick Atwater had just showed up with his yacht, and insisted that Pervis hide his face on the *Albatross* for a month or six weeks. Then Pervis concluded:

> Which I think I would best do, for, while the India ink and Tyrian purple masses in the middle distance have faded somewhat, the sepia and burned umber effects around my left eye appear to be permanent. P. S. The wobble in my nasal cartilage has lessened perceptibly. PP. S. Sail in, old man, and if you can transfer Nuncky's affections—and other belongings—from his purely hypothetical nephew to his very substantial guest, nobody will be so happy as, Yours,
>
> T. P.

The days that followed became even more halcyon. A month sped by on wings as swift as the thoughts of love; and the worst which Monteith had vaguely anticipated had come with a vengeance. He was madly, incurably in love with Glory; and if she was not as hopelessly lost as he, she took mighty good care not to let him have any grounds for doubting that his wild desires were fully reciprocated.

In fact, so complete seemed the understanding between them, that he was on the point of approaching Sir Marmaduke on the subject, when the bottom of hope, love, life itself, dropped out without a moment's warning.

In changing his coat one day he threw the one he was taking off over the back of a chair, and a letter dropped from the inside pocket. He picked it up, and found that it was the one which Pervis had written to Sir Marmaduke, and which he had forgotten to post!

Good heavens!—the horrible possibilities rushed into his mind all at once—whom did Sir Marmaduke think that he was? As far as Monteith knew, nobody at the Priory knew even his name, for he was simply Tom to every-

body—Tom? Oh, Lord! *Had* Sir Marmaduke been taking him for his nephew all this time? This would account for a thousand things otherwise inexplicable.

Fool, fool, *fool* that he had been! *Of course* this was the explanation! It would account for Sir Marmaduke's frequent references to the legacy which he proposed to leave him; for his affectionate familiarity from the very first; for his having so scandalously subjected Glory to an uninterrupted opportunity to fall in love with his supposed nephew and heir; for everything!

Nor did the memory of his own repeated conversations with the old fellow, in which he had so explicitly referred to Pervis, suffice to remove the black horror; for Monteith had only too good reason to believe that Sir Marmaduke had never heard a solitary word that he had spoken.

And Glory? Good Lord! had she also fondly imagined that the man who was paying her such barefaced court was the beloved nephew and heir of her guardian? Of course she had! Doubtless her simply breath-taking willingness to waive all of the usual preliminaries of acquaintance, and the precautions dictated by good form no less than by prudence, was based on the fact that, as the supposed Pervis, he enjoyed the fullest confidence and goodwill of Sir Marmaduke.

The situation was frightful, intolerable; yes, and deucedly awkward! Innocent though he was, it would be very natural for Sir Marmaduke to believe the worst; almost impossible to escape a storm and ultimate catastrophe. Well, there was only one thing to do—he must see the baronet at once, make the best explanation he could, say good-by to Glory, pack up his dress-suit case, and vanish.

But Glory? It was monstrous, absurd, damnable, to suppose that she could have been falling in love all this time with a man whom she had never seen, and not with the man with whom she spent those long, delicious hours every day!

No! He'd see Sir Marmaduke—yes, and Pervis—hanged before he would submit to having this glorious Glory snatched from him by circumstances for which he was not to blame. It might look perilously like obtaining her under false pretenses, now that he knew the situation; but obtain her he would, let the consequences be what they might.

After passing a depressing morning in the seclusion of his room, Monteith wrote Pervis a long letter, giving the harrowing details up to date, and ending:

> Of course, old man, all this makes me feel as though I had killed you and was walking in your shoes; but if you knew what she is to me you wouldn't blame me for it. Let me get your verdict at once.

Then he went down into the Italian garden at the back of the house, where he saw Glory feeding the peacocks. As he walked down the stairs the maddening thought seized him that it would be cowardly, infamous, for him to get an avowal of love from her under the mask of another man's name and fancied identity. By gad! he would tear the mask off and win or lose her as Tom Monteith, or not at all!

It was too late to recall that letter to Pervis, for Swivel had ridden off to post it half an hour ago; but never mind; he would tell Glory the truth, and settle with Pervis later.

She smiled as he approached her—the saddest, sweetest, most wistful little smile—and Monteith plunged right in.

"Glory," he began in a low voice, and bending over her where she sat on the parapet of the terrace, "you must have guessed what this month has meant to me?"

"Yes, Tom."

"Well, Glory, there is something that I must tell you."

"Yes, Tom."

"Something, Glory, that might end it all if you were not the noble woman that you are."

"Yes, Tom."

"Glory, if I were to tell you that my name is not what you think it is, and that I am not the man you suppose me to be, would you still——"

"Yes, Tom."

"You love me, then, Glory? Me for myself alone?"

"Yes, Tom."

The peacocks' shrill call diverted the attention of the gardeners from the scene which followed; and Glory's big sun-hat had been restored to its place, and Monteith was quite calm before he spoke again.

"Glory," he said quietly, and not altogether free from anxiety, "my name is not Pervis, and I am not Sir Marmaduke's nephew, nor his heir."

"I know it, darling," laughed Glory innocently.

"What? Who told you?"

"Sir Marmaduke!"

"Sir Marmaduke? But who in the name of reason could have told him?"

"Tom Pervis told him—everything—ages ago! But, come now, Tom, dear, we really should let Sir Marmaduke know of our—our—you know, dear, what you should say to him. And, anyhow, the dear old darling has been just dying to explode this secret on you ever since Mr. Pervis told him about the joke."

But they had to wait until just before dinner that night to see Sir Marmaduke, for he had gone off to town for the day.

"Know it? Know it?" roared Sir Marmaduke, when Monteith wrote his little confession on a slip of paper and showed it to him. "Of course I know it, you young devil! You see, Tom, the other unhung Tom asked me, in the letter which you forgot to post, to write to him and tell him what I thought of you. When I failed to do so, what does my fine Tom do but write me another letter—and the cat was out! I ran up to see him the very next morning—beastly unmannerly boxers those French!—and we came to the conclusion that it would be no end of a joke, you know, to have you go on lying about Tom being over on the Continent; and giving me a chance, Monteith, to grow to think you, sir, a damn clean, decent, hard-hitting, true gentleman and sportsman, which I do, Tom, with all my heart! My hand, sir! Yes, yes, and if Glory feels about it as I do, you have my blessing, and—now don't fly off the handle as you did that other time! And I shall not forget you later."

"Beg pardon, sir," said a footman at the door, "but 'ere's a telegram, sir; for you, sir," handing it to Monteith.

It was from Pervis, and read:

Verdict: Justifiable homicide; done in self-defense.

TIME'S CHILDREN

TIME has three children, fleeting and fair,
Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow;
Who circle about as we travel on,
And yield us our joy and our sorrow.

Yesterday stands in her widow's weeds,
Bereft and broken and sad;
To-day smiles over an unfilled grave,
And To-morrow is distant and glad.

And we poor wayfarers worship and woo
These daughters of Father Time;
And Yesterday grieves and To-day deceives
And To-morrow's the maiden sublime.

WILLIS GRANGER.

PLATONIC AFFECTION

By H. B. Marriott-Watson



ISS FLETCHER stretched her beautiful arms toward the fire. "We are vastly too sentimental," she declared, with decision.

The young man looked at her and deliberated. "I don't know that I don't agree with you," he said.

"My idea is that fiction has misguided us," continued Miss Fletcher. "You know the effect of traditions and popular influences. For example, will that old fable of the country rector's daughter ever die?"

"The country rector's——?" queried her companion.

"Yes; you know in fiction the country rector's daughter is always beautiful. That is the first absolute and supreme rule to which there are no exceptions. But in life——"

"I was wondering if your father was a clergyman," he said, seeing she hesitated.

"Oh, there you are!" said Miss Fletcher, pouncing on him triumphantly. "There's a case of what I mean. Men consider it right and proper to pay neat compliments to women quite apart from what they really think."

"I assure you I do think——"

"It's all that sickly sentimentality," hurried on Miss Fletcher, "which assumes a certain relation of the sexes. Assumption! It is presumption. How I hate that false note of chivalry!"

"So do I," he agreed eagerly. "I despise it. Women should be treated like men."

"In a spirit of camaraderie," said Miss Fletcher, casting a suspicious glance at him.

"It's the only dignified way," he assented.

"But to presuppose that because a man is a man and a woman a woman there are necessarily any relations between them."

"There sometimes are—tiresome relations."

"Is simply ridiculous," pronounced Miss Fletcher, ignoring him.

"For my part," said the young man, "I frankly confess that I can look on a beautiful woman quite unmoved." He stared coldly at Miss Fletcher. "And beauty, after all, is only skin deep," he added contemptuously.

Miss Fletcher had turned her head away and was regarding the door, as if she had heard the approach of some one. But it was a comfortable hour after dinner, and there were no interruptions. When she turned round again she developed her argument.

"Beauty, of course, is desirable in everything," she remarked judicially. "But its importance is exaggerated."

"Grossly," he said emphatically. "I wouldn't give——"

"I think it might be as well not to err on the side of extravagance," said Miss Fletcher dryly. "Of course, a beautiful woman, like a beautiful picture, or a piece of furniture, is nice to look at."

"That's it; she's nothing more than a beautiful piece of furniture," said the young man, nodding.

Miss Fletcher frowned; very prettily, of course. "I think it's quite time that

the fallacy of classing women among goods and chattels was outgrown," she said severely.

"It ought to be," he said humbly.

"For my part, I take the greatest pleasure in seeing a beautiful woman."

"So do I," said the young man eagerly, and fixing his ardent gaze on her.

Miss Fletcher shifted her position, and looked somewhat put out; she gazed at the door again. It was the young man who resumed the conversation.

"What you say is very true, and it has often occurred to me. Handsome is as handsome does. Of course, beauty in the abstract is to be admired. But how insensate is this worship of beauty, and this artificial cultivation of it by women! They should throw off the trammels of tradition and the novel, and frankly declare their indifference to the other sex."

"Ye-es," assented Miss Fletcher.

"And with that would go, as concomitant, economy. The amount spent on finery would be less; milliners', dressmakers', and linen drapers' bills would decrease."

Miss Fletcher took up a firm stand. "Women don't dress for men," she said loftily.

"Why do they dress?" inquired the young man.

"To—oh, for their own self-respect," she declared.

"Oh!" This was rather a facer. There did not seem to be any way round it, and Miss Fletcher, seeing him reduced to silence, very kindly unbent. She continued the disquisition. "The whole thing, in effect, resolves itself into this—that women have other interests of considerably more importance than that of mere marriage. They're not always thinking of men and marriage, as the trashy novels make them out."

"Then you believe in the possibility of platonic affection?" he asked.

"Most certainly," said Miss Fletcher.

"So do I," he said cordially. "I thoroughly believe in it. What is to prevent a man and a woman, even a young man and a pretty woman, being good companions?"

"Nothing in the world except stupid conventions," said Miss Fletcher.

"Which wise people ignore," continued he. "Say they have opinions in common on—any subject, as, for instance, this very matter we're talking of." He paused.

"Yes," said Miss Fletcher faintly.

"Well, then," he resumed, with animation, "they are good friends, having tested each other. The man has absolutely no admiration for the woman—physically, that is."

"Yes," said Miss Fletcher dubiously.

"But intellectually, yes. He admires her point of view, and he is sympathetically *en rapport* with her."

"Oh, yes," said Miss Fletcher, more decidedly.

"But, naturally, sympathy of that dispassionate kind produces no excitement. It is a calm, torpid, amiable feeling of good fellowship, of comradeship, of——"

"Comradeship," said Miss Fletcher, with some decision, "implies a good deal. One doesn't give one's friendship to every comer."

"Certainly not," he agreed. "Only to those who understand you and are naturally sympathetic. Suppose, for example, for one minute that the case applied to you and to me."

"I'd much prefer——" began Miss Fletcher; but in the ardor of his argument he did not hear her.

"We stand in the position of people who have nothing to do with this silly sentiment. When I look at you I am not always admiring or thinking that you would look better if you hadn't a smut on your nose."

Miss Fletcher hurriedly raised a hand toward her face, and then as hurriedly dropped it.

"I'm not bothering about your clothes, except only in so far as is fitting for self-respect. I'm simply regarding you frankly as a comrade, as a——"

"I—I don't think it is necessary to make personal application of the

theory," said Miss Fletcher, a little confusedly.

"No, and I'm not doing so," he explained. "But it helps me to put things in a concrete form. Just let me suppose. Now in the case I'm speaking of, proximity would, of course, raise no thrill in one. I can be as near as possible." He edged nearer to Miss Fletcher, who stirred uneasily. "And it does not affect my attitude toward you. I can hold your hand without a tremor." He held it.

"Please don't," urged Miss Fletcher, faintly struggling and now softly colored. But he was in the wings of his argument, and of course did not notice.

"I have absolutely no ulterior feelings," he insisted. "My pulse is undisturbed by the juxtaposition. How much more sensible than the foolish sentimentality of which you speak so wisely, and which sets silly hearts a-bobbing! We can thus exchange views rationally, as if you were my sister or another man." Miss Fletcher wrested gently for her hand. "And naturally," he declared, with emphasis, "I don't pay you silly compliments attributing to your beauty, and all sorts of things you haven't got any——"

Miss Fletcher wrenched her hand away decidedly, and rose, her cheeks incarnadine.

"Excuse me, I'm going to join Mrs. Green," she said haughtily, as she swept from the room.

The young man watched her slim figure disappear. "Just as it was getting interesting," he remarked sadly.

APART

APART? Each year the springtime's rosy riot
  Tells both the same sweet wordless things;
To both November woods, deserted, quiet,
  Bring dear rememberings.

For both, from day to day, the ceaseless wonder
  Of Nature's voices strong and kind;
The rain, the snow, the sun, the roll of thunder,
  The calling of the wind.

For both the signal-fires at sunset burning,
  The brooding night that soothes and stills,
For both, at last, the radiant returning
  Of day across the hills.

For both the joy ineffable of giving
  A love that pours out strength and grace,
That makes life purer, better worth the living,
  Defying time and space.

Apart—yet hear thy voice, my spirit breathless
  With silent ecstasy the while,
Yet feel thee near, yet hold forever deathless
  The memory of thy smile!

ALICE E. ALLEN.



The "plans" of the theatrical manager. No false modesty in preliminary announcements. The "girl question" the one weighty topic of musical comedy. The English stage invaded by American plays. New plays by British writers to be seen on the American stage this season. Theatrical folk always brazen imitators. Epidemic of plays dealing with college life. "Les Bouffons" to be Maude Adams' new vehicle. Henrietta Crosman to appear in a dramatization of "Pilgrim's Progress." New plays by Maeterlinck, Augustus Thomas and Edmund Day. E. H. Sothern to revive "Dundreary." The new season to open with a flood of good things

A THEATRICAL manager without "plans" is a ship without a sail, a spellbinder without an audience, a honeymoon without a bride. To use the succinct vernacular of the theatrical world, "it can't be done."

Each spring your amusement-purveyor sets forth on a journey to some remote section, bent on accumulating sufficient "plans" to carry him through the approaching season. The majority of these laborers in the vineyard of make-believe ship on fast steamers to England. Others seclude themselves in the fastnesses of the mountains or obtrude themselves on the board-walks of popular seashore resorts. A very few remain in the vicinity of sweltering Broadway. No matter whither they journey, they can have but one mission —the collection of a gaudier set of "plans" than their nearest competitors.

Due and reverberating announcement is made of the departure of the missionaries who, whatever else may be said of them, are not to be accused of false modesty. The seemingly phlegmatic public is cautioned to wait, to curb its impatience, to trust in the unselfish devotion of the vanishing manager to the interests of his clients. Graciously the public obeys, checking any tendency to a high fever of excitement, and awaiting the result with becoming decorum.

And now is come the period of the year when the haul is displayed before the dancing eyes of the obedient multitude. The day of enlightenment is at hand—the "plans" are about to be unfolded.

Brilliant lawyers, learned judges, merchant princes, and eminent theologians return from summer vacations without a word of message about their personal accomplishments. They have, perhaps, a sunburned nose to show the immediate members of their family, but they do not summon the reporters or issue long interviews with themselves. To the theatrical manager alone is reserved this privilege. He does not regard it as a privilege; quite to the con-

a wide, circular drive, where a couple of high-spirited horses, put tandem to an extremely lofty dog-cart, were apparently going through a horse-show rehearsal, the magnificent gray leader being in the act of walking around the ring on his hind legs.

In the cart sat an oddly youngish old gentleman in perfectly fitting black-and-white checks, vivid tan gloves, a puffy, crimson Ascot tie showing above the flowered, corn-colored waistcoat; and a big bunch of violets, matching the bunch tied to the whip, on the left lapel of his coat. His natty fawn derby hat, worn with the least little bit of a list to one side, topped a purple, pugnacious, thoroughbred face, through the veins of which flowed evidence of the antiquity and soundness and bouquet of the port wine and Madeira in the cellars at Barston Priory.

He was tooling the cart with the dexterity of an expert, and seemed not at all alarmed at the eccentricities of the big gray leader. As the cart wheeled by the platform on the next turn of the ring he spied Monteith, and instantly brought the prancing gray down on all fours, and pivoted the vehicle alongside with a trick of the wrist.

"At his head, at his head!" he yelled to the groom, and then in a jiffy he had twisted the lines about the whip, hopped nimbly from his high perch, and ran forward to welcome Monteith with both hands.

"So here you are! Well, well, well! And fit, damme, fit, sir! Why the devil didn't he write that you were a man, and not one of those long-haired artist asses? Don't ever be an ass, Tom, and wear long hair!" chuckled the old boy, as he slapped Monteith on the back and spun him around to look at him.

"It's awfully good of you, Sir Marmaduke, to receive me so kindly, especially since I appreciate how deeply disappointed you must be," replied Monteith, feeling vaguely uncomfortable, but accounting for the old gentleman's embarrassing cordiality by supposing that Pervis must have laid it on rather thick in his letter of introduction; for Pervis had a way of insisting on "Love me, love my dog!" which made a note of introduction from him a passport to the affections of the most casual acquaintance.

"Now you sha'n't mind if I call you Tom, shall you?" rattled on the old man, ignoring Monteith's remarks, and increasing his confusion by jabbing a jocular thumb into his side. "Come, now, it's Tom, isn't it?"

"Why, yes; certainly, sir," stammered Monteith; "only it almost makes me feel as though——"

"'E's very 'ard of 'earin', sir," explained the groom from the seat at Monteith's back, and without turning his head or moving a muscle.

"How long can you stop?" asked Sir Marmaduke, when he had got the leader down to a rhythmic agreement with the steady, aristocratic trot of the high-stepping wheeler.

"Oh, only over Sunday, sir," answered Monteith, "as I must hurry back to meet Tom at—at—at St. Malo, you know, sir."

"Ride to hounds?" asked Sir Marmaduke, taking Monteith's breath away by the suddenness of the tack.

"'E don't never hanswer a question, sir," came illuminatingly from the rear.

"I've had a taste of hunting—with the Meadowbrook hounds, sir, a famous American pack," megaphoned Monteith, thinking it wiser to make the effort to be polite than to rely too confidently on the groom.

"And 'e don't never hexpect no hanswers, either, sir," continued the groom comfortingly, since Sir Marmaduke paid no attention to Monteith's remark.

"And to think that I've allowed Maria to make me make a blithering idiot of myself all these years!" snarled the baronet, very red and peppery; and Monteith was thankful that he never expected an answer.

"If Maria tries any of her nonsensical sentiment games on you, Tom, take my advice and don't pay the slightest attention to anything she says," sputtered the old gentleman, redder and more peppery; and Monteith's thankful-

ness deepened. It would have been so difficult, under all the circumstances, to discuss Maria.

"*I* don't," went on Sir Marmaduke, turning and looking at Monteith in a way that seemed to indicate that this time some sort of answer was expected.

"'E don't hexpect a hanswer heven now, sir; 'e don't really, sir," reached Monteith through the back; and he waived the deal and waited for Sir Marmaduke to suggest the next topic for meditation.

"I do hope," presently began the baronet, "that old Beeston hasn't been filling your head with all sorts of absurd ideas?"

"Oh, no, sir; I never met Mr. Beeston," Monteith was forced into replying by the rising inflection in his host's voice.

"A great ass, Beeston, don't you think?"

Monteith fell back upon the word of the groom, and remained silent.

"Well, here we are!" cried Sir Marmaduke, as the cart whirled through the great gates of the park, a superb specimen of woodland and lawn and gardens, with a rambling, many-chimneyed, ivy-covered Elizabethan house standing at the top of the avenue of beeches, with a long terrace running the full length of the front. "Now you must make yourself at home, Tom, for nobody will make the slightest effort to entertain you. What's your fad, eh? If you go in for golf or tennis or riding or billiards or driving—it's yours for the asking. Swivel, see that Mr. Tom has anything that he likes in the stables, will you?"

"Yes, sir," replied the groom, the tip of his finger on the cockade on his hat.

"And now, Tom, my boy, I'm off till dinner—eight o'clock; and you must browse for yourself," laughed Sir Marmaduke, delighting Monteith by leaving him to get his bearings as best he could.

A gnawing curiosity to learn who Maria might be led him to seek the stables and Swivel.

"Hoh! that's m'lydy, sir; but she's not at 'ome now, sir. Lydy Barston is tykin' the barths at some German waterin'-plyce, sir; rheumatism, sir; somethink hawful, sir."

Monteith found it difficult to regret Lady Barston's absence; and walked slowly back to the house, through whose labyrinth of superb old galleries and wainscoted rooms he soon lost himself in a trance of artistic envy. After examining the beautiful portraits in the long gallery, he drew aside the portières hanging under a heavy, squat Tudor stone arch, and found himself looking into the great library, dim and mellow by reason of the rich painted glass in the high mullioned windows. His eye ran around the low, carved bookshelves until it reached the fireplace, with its great overhanging stone hood, before which, curled up in a huge armchair, a girl sat reading.

Monteith almost stopped breathing; he had never seen anything so beautiful before. With the big folio lying in her lap, and her exquisite chin propped up on her hand, she sat gazing up dreamily at the ceiling, as if trying to let some line that she had just read sink into her heart. The profile was of the high-born, queenly, almost haughty English type; the neck magnificent, the hair a shimmering chestnut, and the shoulders and figure those of some unattained dream of Dante Gabriel Rosetti's. She was young, possibly twenty-three, and Monteith thought that he detected a spirit so innocent and childlike in her that he felt like a profane intruder in some sanctuary, and quickly dropped the curtain and tiptoed back through the gallery and out into the court.

Who was she? Certainly Tom Pervis had never heard of her presence at Barston Priory, or he would have spoken of her—yes, or more likely he would have run any risk of offending Sir Marmaduke rather than send such a chap as Tom Monteith as his substitute! At all events, dinner would reveal the identity of the glorious creature; so Monteith smoked and waited.

Dinner-time arrived at last, but Sir Marmaduke and Monteith dined alone; the vision was nowhere visible. And the worst of it was, that Monteith had

lost all hope of ever being able to get a reply of any sort to any sort of question from Sir Marmaduke; for the old gentleman invariably muttered, "Quite so! Quite so!" and changed the subject.

The monologue at dinner was diverting enough, to be sure, for Monteith found Sir Marmaduke quite the most highly spiced old boy that he had ever met, his talk running glibly on from horses and wine and hunting, to art and letters and travel.

Yes, it was immensely entertaining; but it was a monologue, and the mind of the best listener will wander. Monteith's wandered constantly—to the library and the glorious girl whom he had seen there.

During a momentary absence of the butler, and a lull in Sir Marmaduke's rapid-fire reminiscences, Monteith's curiosity—or was it some other and deeper feeling?—inspired him to make one last desperate attempt to learn who the vision was.

"Might I ask," he bawled at the old man, "who the young lady is whom I saw to-day in the library?"

Sir Marmaduke had screwed up his eyes and held his hand at his ear as Monteith spoke; but he merely said: "Quite so! As I was saying, we had been having no end of bad luck—not a grouse in three days—when Lord Arthur Powis suggested that we——"

To this day Monteith does not exactly know what it was that Lord Arthur Powis suggested, for it took Sir Marmaduke half an hour to finish the story; and then they were through dinner, and went into the little study off the library to smoke.

Monteith observed that the old gentleman's air changed when they had lit their cigars and sat facing each other; also that he rose and went to the door, looked up and down the passage, and shut the door tight before seating himself.

"Now, Tom," he began, "I want to have a perfectly clear understanding with you from the first. I don't mind telling you that I like you. No, damme, I say I like you. So far so good!"

"If he only would buy an ear-trumpet!" thought Monteith, conscious that he really ought to say something—and the utter futility of saying it!

"But while I tell you that I like you," went on the baronet, "I hope you realize that this does not mean that I intend to bequeath you——"

Deaf or not deaf, the old man must be told that he had grossly mistaken his man! Monteith sprang to his feet. If the old cad were twenty years younger he would have to swallow this piece of insufferable British valuation of American ideas of decency and independence!

"What!" he exclaimed. "Why, Sir Marmaduke, Tom Pervis would see you in hell before he would accept a cent from you or any other man, unless he had some claim upon it, and it came to him in a perfectly natural way! Pervis would resent your insinuations; and what do you suppose that I, a total stranger, who am here only to explain your nephew's unfortunate absence, must think of you? With all due respect, sir, to your age and the laws of hospitality, I tell you that I despise and——"

"Bravo!" cried Sir Marmaduke—he had heard not a syllable of Monteith's heroic harangue—clapping his wrinkled hands and dancing forward to pound Monteith on the back. "Bravo! That's the spirit! How I wish that Maria could have witnessed your manly outbreak! I knew the sort of stuff that you are made of, and, damme, I admire your spirit, Tom, damme, and the game way in which you repudiate all idea of inheriting my property. Come, boy, sit down and drink a glass of this excellent old port. So! To the sort of chap who has made America what it is!"

He drained his glass, watching with twinkling little eyes the rapidly returning good nature and generally improved expression on Tom's face.

"There!" went on Sir Marmaduke, smacking his lips. "Since we understand one another so well, I don't mind telling you—old Beeston himself doesn't know this—that aside from the entailed estates, which must, of course, descend to that insufferable young ass, the late

Lord Ashby's eldest son, I possess devisable property to the extent of some two hundred thousand pounds, more or less, not to mention——"

Monteith protested—with his hands—but the baronet was oblivious to anything, spoken or indicated, when a monologue was under full headway; so Monteith had to hear that Pervis had a rather good prospect of coming into a snug little sum one of these days.

"And now that I have told you to your impudent young face, sir, what I shall not do for you," concluded Sir Marmaduke, in great good spirits, "I'll tell you—you young knave!—what I have already done for you. I've said a damn good word for you, Tom, to the finest young woman in the world, sir, who is looking after me here during poor Lady Barston's deplorable absence at some nasty little German spa or other—can't recollect just which one, but it doesn't signify."

Monteith sat up; the monologue had become absorbing; and before he went to bed he had gathered that Gloria Maltravers was an orphan, an heiress in a modest way, a girl of wonderful mind and character, an excellent musician, a "woman with sense, sir, and the best seat in the Barston-Nesby hunt, damme!"

All of which, or, rather, much more than all which, Monteith had guessed during that instant's glimpse of Gloria in the library. It was hard to wait until morning, when, Sir Marmaduke assured him, Gloria would be back from Market Nesby. Long before morning Monteith found himself so nearly in love that he prepared himself for the worst. It came.

By command of Sir Marmaduke, they became Tom and Glory to each other at the very first interview; and by luncheon-time they were old friends. An acquaintance does ripen so much faster when the parties to it have been fully described to one another!

It was at luncheon, moreover, that Monteith began to appreciate the monologue as a means of entertainment—when the monologist is stone-deaf it affords such a delightful excuse and cover for private conversation on the side. And dinner was the same, only more so.

The days that followed were halcyon; and, just when Monteith's conscience began to bother him about having left poor Pervis alone so long, a mysterious private messenger arrived bringing a letter from Pervis himself, in which he sent the glad tidings that Dick Atwater had just showed up with his yacht, and insisted that Pervis hide his face on the *Albatross* for a month or six weeks. Then Pervis concluded:

> Which I think I would best do, for, while the India ink and Tyrian purple masses in the middle distance have faded somewhat, the sepia and burned umber effects around my left eye appear to be permanent. P. S. The wobble in my nasal cartilage has lessened perceptibly. PP. S. Sail in, old man, and if you can transfer Nuncky's affections—and other belongings—from his purely hypothetical nephew to his very substantial guest, nobody will be so happy as, Yours,
>
> T. P.

The days that followed became even more halcyon. A month sped by on wings as swift as the thoughts of love; and the worst which Monteith had vaguely anticipated had come with a vengeance. He was madly, incurably in love with Glory; and if she was not as hopelessly lost as he, she took mighty good care not to let him have any grounds for doubting that his wild desires were fully reciprocated.

In fact, so complete seemed the understanding between them, that he was on the point of approaching Sir Marmaduke on the subject, when the bottom of hope, love, life itself, dropped out without a moment's warning.

In changing his coat one day he threw the one he was taking off over the back of a chair, and a letter dropped from the inside pocket. He picked it up, and found that it was the one which Pervis had written to Sir Marmaduke, and which he had forgotten to post!

Good heavens!—the horrible possibilities rushed into his mind all at once—whom did Sir Marmaduke think that he was? As far as Monteith knew, nobody at the Priory knew even his name, for he was simply Tom to every-

body—Tom? Oh, Lord! *Had* Sir Marmaduke been taking him for his nephew all this time? This would account for a thousand things otherwise inexplicable.

Fool, fool, *fool* that he had been! *Of course* this was the explanation! It would account for Sir Marmaduke's frequent references to the legacy which he proposed to leave him; for his affectionate familiarity from the very first; for his having so scandalously subjected Glory to an uninterrupted opportunity to fall in love with his supposed nephew and heir; for everything!

Nor did the memory of his own repeated conversations with the old fellow, in which he had so explicitly referred to Pervis, suffice to remove the black horror; for Monteith had only too good reason to believe that Sir Marmaduke had never heard a solitary word that he had spoken.

And Glory? Good Lord! had she also fondly imagined that the man who was paying her such barefaced court was the beloved nephew and heir of her guardian? Of course she had! Doubtless her simply breath-taking willingness to waive all of the usual preliminaries of acquaintance, and the precautions dictated by good form no less than by prudence, was based on the fact that, as the supposed Pervis, he enjoyed the fullest confidence and goodwill of Sir Marmaduke.

The situation was frightful, intolerable; yes, and deucedly awkward! Innocent though he was, it would be very natural for Sir Marmaduke to believe the worst; almost impossible to escape a storm and ultimate catastrophe. Well, there was only one thing to do—he must see the baronet at once, make the best explanation he could, say good-by to Glory, pack up his dress-suit case, and vanish.

But Glory? It was monstrous, absurd, damnable, to suppose that she could have been falling in love all this time with a man whom she had never seen, and not with the man with whom she spent those long, delicious hours every day!

No! He'd see Sir Marmaduke—yes, and Pervis—hanged before he would submit to having this glorious Glory snatched from him by circumstances for which he was not to blame. It might look perilously like obtaining her under false pretenses, now that he knew the situation; but obtain her he would, let the consequences be what they might.

After passing a depressing morning in the seclusion of his room, Monteith wrote Pervis a long letter, giving the harrowing details up to date, and ending:

> Of course, old man, all this makes me feel as though I had killed you and was walking in your shoes; but if you knew what she is to me you wouldn't blame me for it. Let me get your verdict at once.

Then he went down into the Italian garden at the back of the house, where he saw Glory feeding the peacocks. As he walked down the stairs the maddening thought seized him that it would be cowardly, infamous, for him to get an avowal of love from her under the mask of another man's name and fancied identity. By gad! he would tear the mask off and win or lose her as Tom Monteith, or not at all!

It was too late to recall that letter to Pervis, for Swivel had ridden off to post it half an hour ago; but never mind; he would tell Glory the truth, and settle with Pervis later.

She smiled as he approached her—the saddest, sweetest, most wistful little smile—and Monteith plunged right in.

"Glory," he began in a low voice, and bending over her where she sat on the parapet of the terrace, "you must have guessed what this month has meant to me?"

"Yes, Tom."

"Well, Glory, there is something that I must tell you."

"Yes, Tom."

"Something, Glory, that might end it all if you were not the noble woman that you are."

"Yes, Tom."

"Glory, if I were to tell you that my name is not what you think it is, and that I am not the man you suppose me to be, would you still——"

"Yes, Tom."

"You love me, then, Glory? Me for myself alone?"

"Yes, Tom."

The peacocks' shrill call diverted the attention of the gardeners from the scene which followed; and Glory's big sun-hat had been restored to its place, and Monteith was quite calm before he spoke again.

"Glory," he said quietly, and not altogether free from anxiety, "my name is not Pervis, and I am not Sir Marmaduke's nephew, nor his heir."

"I know it, darling," laughed Glory innocently.

"What? Who told you?"

"Sir Marmaduke!"

"Sir Marmaduke? But who in the name of reason could have told him?"

"Tom Pervis told him—everything—ages ago! But, come now, Tom, dear, we really should let Sir Marmaduke know of our—our—you know, dear, what you should say to him. And, anyhow, the dear old darling has been just dying to explode this secret on you ever since Mr. Pervis told him about the joke."

But they had to wait until just before dinner that night to see Sir Marmaduke, for he had gone off to town for the day.

"Know it? Know it?" roared Sir Marmaduke, when Monteith wrote his little confession on a slip of paper and showed it to him. "Of course I know it, you young devil! You see, Tom, the other unhung Tom asked me, in the letter which you forgot to post, to write to him and tell him what I thought of you. When I failed to do so, what does my fine Tom do but write me another letter—and the cat was out! I ran up to see him the very next morning—beastly unmannerly boxers those French!—and we came to the conclusion that it would be no end of a joke, you know, to have you go on lying about Tom being over on the Continent; and giving me a chance, Monteith, to grow to think you, sir, a damn clean, decent, hard-hitting, true gentleman and sportsman, which I do, Tom, with all my heart! My hand, sir! Yes, yes, and if Glory feels about it as I do, you have my blessing, and—now don't fly off the handle as you did that other time! And I shall not forget you later."

"Beg pardon, sir," said a footman at the door, "but 'ere's a telegram, sir; for you, sir," handing it to Monteith.

It was from Pervis, and read:

Verdict: Justifiable homicide; done in self-defense.

TIME'S CHILDREN

TIME has three children, fleeting and fair,
  Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow;
Who circle about as we travel on,
  And yield us our joy and our sorrow.

Yesterday stands in her widow's weeds,
  Bereft and broken and sad;
To-day smiles over an unfilled grave,
  And To-morrow is distant and glad.

And we poor wayfarers worship and woo
  These daughters of Father Time;
And Yesterday grieves and To-day deceives
  And To-morrow's the maiden sublime.

WILLIS GRANGER.

PLATONIC AFFECTION

By H. B. Marriott-Watson

MISS FLETCHER stretched her beautiful arms toward the fire. "We are vastly too sentimental," she declared, with decision.

The young man looked at her and deliberated. "I don't know that I don't agree with you," he said.

"My idea is that fiction has misguided us," continued Miss Fletcher. "You know the effect of traditions and popular influences. For example, will that old fable of the country rector's daughter ever die?"

"The country rector's——?" queried her companion.

"Yes; you know in fiction the country rector's daughter is always beautiful. That is the first absolute and supreme rule to which there are no exceptions. But in life——"

"I was wondering if your father was a clergyman," he said, seeing she hesitated.

"Oh, there you are!" said Miss Fletcher, pouncing on him triumphantly. "There's a case of what I mean. Men consider it right and proper to pay neat compliments to women quite apart from what they really think."

"I assure you I do think——"

"It's all that sickly sentimentality," hurried on Miss Fletcher, "which assumes a certain relation of the sexes. Assumption! It is presumption. How I hate that false note of chivalry!"

"So do I," he agreed eagerly. "I despise it. Women should be treated like men."

"In a spirit of camaraderie," said Miss Fletcher, casting a suspicious glance at him.

"It's the only dignified way," he assented.

"But to presuppose that because a man is a man and a woman a woman there are necessarily any relations between them."

"There sometimes are—tiresome relations."

"Is simply ridiculous," pronounced Miss Fletcher, ignoring him.

"For my part," said the young man, "I frankly confess that I can look on a beautiful woman quite unmoved." He stared coldly at Miss Fletcher. "And beauty, after all, is only skin deep," he added contemptuously.

Miss Fletcher had turned her head away and was regarding the door, as if she had heard the approach of some one. But it was a comfortable hour after dinner, and there were no interruptions. When she turned round again she developed her argument.

"Beauty, of course, is desirable in everything," she remarked judicially. "But its importance is exaggerated."

"Grossly," he said emphatically. "I wouldn't give——"

"I think it might be as well not to err on the side of extravagance," said Miss Fletcher dryly. "Of course, a beautiful woman, like a beautiful picture, or a piece of furniture, is nice to look at."

"That's it; she's nothing more than a beautiful piece of furniture," said the young man, nodding.

Miss Fletcher frowned; very prettily, of course. "I think it's quite time that

the fallacy of classing women among goods and chattels was outgrown," she said severely.

"It ought to be," he said humbly.

"For my part, I take the greatest pleasure in seeing a beautiful woman."

"So do I," said the young man eagerly, and fixing his ardent gaze on her.

Miss Fletcher shifted her position, and looked somewhat put out; she gazed at the door again. It was the young man who resumed the conversation.

"What you say is very true, and it has often occurred to me. Handsome is as handsome does. Of course, beauty in the abstract is to be admired. But how insensate is this worship of beauty, and this artificial cultivation of it by women! They should throw off the trammels of tradition and the novel, and frankly declare their indifference to the other sex."

"Ye-es," assented Miss Fletcher.

"And with that would go, as concomitant, economy. The amount spent on finery would be less; milliners', dressmakers', and linen drapers' bills would decrease."

Miss Fletcher took up a firm stand. "Women don't dress for men," she said loftily.

"Why do they dress?" inquired the young man.

"To—oh, for their own self-respect," she declared.

"Oh!" This was rather a facer. There did not seem to be any way round it, and Miss Fletcher, seeing him reduced to silence, very kindly unbent. She continued the disquisition. "The whole thing, in effect, resolves itself into this—that women have other interests of considerably more importance than that of mere marriage. They're not always thinking of men and marriage, as the trashy novels make them out."

"Then you believe in the possibility of platonic affection?" he asked.

"Most certainly," said Miss Fletcher.

"So do I," he said cordially. "I thoroughly believe in it. What is to prevent a man and a woman, even a young man and a pretty woman, being good companions?"

"Nothing in the world except stupid conventions," said Miss Fletcher.

"Which wise people ignore," continued he. "Say they have opinions in common on—any subject, as, for instance, this very matter we're talking of." He paused.

"Yes," said Miss Fletcher faintly.

"Well, then," he resumed, with animation, "they are good friends, having tested each other. The man has absolutely no admiration for the woman—physically, that is."

"Yes," said Miss Fletcher dubiously.

"But intellectually, yes. He admires her point of view, and he is sympathetically *en rapport* with her."

"Oh, yes," said Miss Fletcher, more decidedly.

"But, naturally, sympathy of that dispassionate kind produces no excitement. It is a calm, torpid, amiable feeling of good fellowship, of comradeship, of——"

"Comradeship," said Miss Fletcher, with some decision, "implies a good deal. One doesn't give one's friendship to every comer."

"Certainly not," he agreed. "Only to those who understand you and are naturally sympathetic. Suppose, for example, for one minute that the case applied to you and to me."

"I'd much prefer——" began Miss Fletcher; but in the ardor of his argument he did not hear her.

"We stand in the position of people who have nothing to do with this silly sentiment. When I look at you I am not always admiring or thinking that you would look better if you hadn't a smut on your nose."

Miss Fletcher hurriedly raised a hand toward her face, and then as hurriedly dropped it.

"I'm not bothering about your clothes, except only in so far as is fitting for self-respect. I'm simply regarding you frankly as a comrade, as a——"

"I—I don't think it is necessary to make personal application of the

theory," said Miss Fletcher, a little confusedly.

"No, and I'm not doing so," he explained. "But it helps me to put things in a concrete form. Just let me suppose. Now in the case I'm speaking of, proximity would, of course, raise no thrill in one. I can be as near as possible." He edged nearer to Miss Fletcher, who stirred uneasily. "And it does not affect my attitude toward you. I can hold your hand without a tremor." He held it.

"Please don't," urged Miss Fletcher, faintly struggling and now softly colored. But he was in the wings of his argument, and of course did not notice.

"I have absolutely no ulterior feelings," he insisted. "My pulse is undisturbed by the juxtaposition. How much more sensible than the foolish sentimentality of which you speak so wisely, and which sets silly hearts a-bobbing! We can thus exchange views rationally, as if you were my sister or another man." Miss Fletcher wrested gently for her hand. "And naturally," he declared, with emphasis, "I don't pay you silly compliments attributing to your beauty, and all sorts of things you haven't got any——"

Miss Fletcher wrenched her hand away decidedly, and rose, her cheeks incarnadine.

"Excuse me, I'm going to join Mrs. Green," she said haughtily, as she swept from the room.

The young man watched her slim figure disappear. "Just as it was getting interesting," he remarked sadly.

APART

APART? Each year the springtime's rosy riot
  Tells both the same sweet wordless things;
To both November woods, deserted, quiet,
  Bring dear rememberings.

For both, from day to day, the ceaseless wonder
  Of Nature's voices strong and kind:
The rain, the snow, the sun, the roll of thunder,
  The calling of the wind.

For both the signal-fires at sunset burning,
  The brooding night that soothes and stills,
For both, at last, the radiant returning
  Of day across the hills.

For both the joy ineffable of giving
  A love that pours out strength and grace,
That makes life purer, better worth the living,
  Defying time and space.

Apart—yet hear thy voice, my spirit breathless
  With silent ecstasy the while,
Yet feel thee near, yet hold forever deathless
  The memory of thy smile!

ALICE E. ALLEN.



The "plans" of the theatrical manager. No false modesty in preliminary announcements. The "girl question" the one weighty topic of musical comedy. The English stage invaded by American plays. New plays by British writers to be seen on the American stage this season. Theatrical folk always brazen imitators. Epidemic of plays dealing with college life. "Les Bouffons" to be Maude Adams' new vehicle. Henrietta Crosman to appear in a dramatization of "Pilgrim's Progress." New plays by Maeterlinck, Augustus Thomas and Edmund Day. E. H. Sothern to revive "Dundreary." The new season to open with a flood of good things

A THEATRICAL manager without "plans" is a ship without a sail, a spellbinder without an audience, a honeymoon without a bride. To use the succinct vernacular of the theatrical world, "it can't be done."

Each spring your amusement-purveyor sets forth on a journey to some remote section, bent on accumulating sufficient "plans" to carry him through the approaching season. The majority of these laborers in the vineyard of make-believe ship on fast steamers to England. Others seclude themselves in the fastnesses of the mountains or obtrude themselves on the board-walks of popular seashore resorts. A very few remain in the vicinity of sweltering Broadway. No matter whither they journey, they can have but one mission—the collection of a gaudier set of "plans" than their nearest competitors.

Due and reverberating announcement is made of the departure of the missionaries who, whatever else may be said of them, are not to be accused of false modesty. The seemingly phlegmatic public is cautioned to wait, to curb its impatience, to trust in the unselfish devotion of the vanishing manager to the interests of his clients. Graciously the public obeys, checking any tendency to a high fever of excitement, and awaiting the result with becoming decorum.

And now is come the period of the year when the haul is displayed before the dancing eyes of the obedient multitude. The day of enlightenment is at hand—the "plans" are about to be unfolded.

Brilliant lawyers, learned judges, merchant princes, and eminent theologians return from summer vacations without a word of message about their personal accomplishments. They have, perhaps, a sunburned nose to show the immediate members of their family, but they do not summon the reporters or issue long interviews with themselves. To the theatrical manager alone is reserved this privilege. He does not regard it as a privilege; quite to the con-

trary, he deems it a vested right, except when he thinks of it as his duty to the public.

If he be in a gracious mood, he adjusts his silk hat at the most impressive angle, lights a long and powerful cigar, and expresses his willingness to meet representatives of the press. He is far more likely to take the newspapers into his confidence through the medium of typewritten statements, that include, besides his specific achievements of the summer, a complete history of the drama, and an autobiography. Stripped of its grandiloquent verbiage and reduced to cold fact, the "plans" usually simmer down to an option on a third-rate English musical comedy, or a faint hope of obtaining the American rights of a hopelessly French farce.

In this routine the manager is not to be condemned. His primary motive is not deception. He harms no one, for the public will no more be deluded by his braggadocio than by the harangue of a side-show "barker." The barker amuses them, and so does the manager. He is following a custom, observing a tradition, contributing his share to an approved scheme of showmanship.

At the outset, it may be stated that, while there are no radical innovations forecasted in the fall styles of drama, there is to be observed a certain solidity and dignity, a more pronounced tendency to the serious play. As is customary, the opening guns of the season are fired by purveyors of musical comedies, and candor compels the admission that these potpourris are but one step removed from the continuous vaudeville performance. Pity 'tis, 'tis true, that step is a downward one.

The one weighty topic which the librettist finds worthy of consideration is the girl question. Old girls with new names will wink and smile and kick just as they did when they were christened "The Casino Girl," "The Belle of New York," "The Gaiety Girl," and "The Blonde in Black." Here are some of the titles of the new musical pieces: "The Motor Girl," "The Time, the Place, and the Girl," "The Dairymaids," "The Girl Behind the Counter," "Lola From Berlin," "The Hurdy-Gurdy Girl," "The Lady From Lane's," and "Nelly Neil." One Western impresario, more audacious or more honest than his competitors, scorns subterfuge, and defiantly labels his decoction "The Girl Question."

Once, after a vain effort to write something fresh about a notoriously stale musical play, a distinguished critic boiled his review down to the bald statement: " 'Sergeant Kitty' is another one of those things." Advance information leads one to believe that the long parade of "Girls" above mentioned is made up of more of "those things." Far be it from the purpose of this inquiry to condemn a musical chicken before it is hatched; and so many of "those things" have held sway while ponderous plays were tottering on their foundations of history and problems that one must be swept along by the judgment of the populace.

One musical play, a light opera, looms up richer in promise than the others. It is entitled "The Merry Widow," and is the prevailing operatic craze of all Europe. Franz Lehar, the composer, was virtually unknown until the tuneful waltzes of this Viennese "Widow" took Europe by storm. "Now, if reputable globe-trotting citizens may be relied upon, every café, summer-garden, and hotel on the Continent resounds with the dreamy strains of the exquisite melodies. London, also, has succumbed, and "The Merry Widow" is being nourished there by George Edwardes, father of the meaningless musical comedy.

It is a noteworthy fact, demonstrating the progress of the American stage, that for the first time in theatrical history our exports are beginning to approach in volume our imports. In other words, while the balance of trade still continues in favor of England and France as against America, those two countries no longer send us a hundred plays to the one we manage to foist upon them.

The London season is at its height in June. That month found on the boards of London playhouses "Brewster's Millions," "The Earl of Paw-

tucket," "Toddles" (by Clyde Fitch), "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," "In the Bishop's Carriage," and Grace George in an adaptation of "Divorçons," by Margaret Mayo. In Paris, Olga Nethersole has been presenting a repertoire at the Sarah Bernhardt Theater; and Grace George contemplates two performances of "Divorçons" for the edification of the boulevardiers. At no period of the interchange of plays have there been as many foreign plays on our stage simultaneously.

Not all of these American enterprises have impressed the British mind; and it is an open secret that the aforesaid British mind steadfastly resents the invasion. "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" was hailed joyously because its back-yard characters represented exactly the types London is glad to believe prevail in America. *Mrs. Wiggs, Miss Hazey,* and *Mr. Stubbins* the Briton accepts greedily as the flower of our citizenship. Most of the other plays have triumphed in spite of the antipathy.

In exchange, while England and France will this season supply many of our stars with vehicles, the number is fifty per cent. less than the quota of two years ago. Amusement-merchants are beginning to realize that Americans make the better plays, just as they make the better yachts, the better athletes, and the better everything else except, perhaps, cotillion leaders.

James K. Hackett, Maude Adams, John Drew, Margaret Illington, and Otis Skinner are among our stars to stick to the made-in-Europe brand of play this season. Mr. Hackett is to be pardoned for his seeming disloyalty, inasmuch as "John Glayde's Honor," the play he has chosen for himself, is from the pen of Alfred Sutro, author of the very successful "The Walls of Jericho." Since writing "The Walls of Jericho," the first piece to bring him repute, except as a translator and adaptor, Mr. Sutro has tried vainly on three different occasions to please the American public. Miss Ellis Jeffreys was unfortunate enough to pin her faith to two of them; and William H. Crane struggled valiantly in the third. Mr. Sutro's weakness has been in his story. No one can gainsay the brilliancy of his dialogue. It scintillates with all the sparkle of Oscar Wilde. It rains lustrous repartee, it pours trenchant epigram. And it merely sprinkles plot.

Under Mr. Hackett's direction, Dallas Welford, the pudgy, red-faced *Hoppy* of delicious "Mr. Hopkinson," will have a new rôle in a piece called "Public Opinion." That play, by the way, is the only new farce of note that appears in the horizon. Theatrical folk ever were and ever will be the basest, most brazen imitators, and immediately following one successful play, many others of the same general structure are launched quickly in the hope of profiting by a new vogue. Manifestly, however, farce has not been wanted in large quantities since the days of the late Charles H. Hoyt, the best writer of this form of drama the world has known.

When "Mr. Hopkinson," with its refreshingly novel idea, burst into popularity, there sprang up on all sides farces of varying degrees of merit. The situation was like a recent meeting of protest called by the Playwrights' League—a band of tyros—which a well-known critic described as, "Playwrights—playwrights everywhere, but not a play in sight." "Mr. Hopkinson" succeeded because it was ingenious, and because Mr. Welford possessed a unique personality that fitted the titular character as snugly as a free lunch fits a walking-delegate. The imitations were feeble. They lingered a while, and then curled up and fell by the wayside.

So also it comes about that "The Road to Yesterday" will find its reflection this season in "When Knights Were Bold" and "Poor John." "The Road to Yesterday," as all New York ought to know by this time, if it would know what is good for it, is merely the heroine's dream portrayed in action. "When Knights Were Bold" and "Poor John" also belong to the class of dream-plays, although the treatment is more broadly farcical. Francis Wilson will appear in the one; Richard Golden is now making fun in the other.

The same tendency to imitate is revealed in the epidemic of plays dealing with college life. In the wake of "The College Widow," there came "Strongheart," "Brown of Harvard," "The Boys of Company B"—atmospherically, if not scenically, collegiate—and a comedy deliberately kept out of New York which deals with Somebody or Other at Yale.

A mere change of sex this fall brings us to "Commencement Days," by Margaret Mayo and Virginia Frame, and an unnamed comedy by Rida Johnson Young, author of "Brown of Harvard." In them the sweet girl graduate, instead of the football hero, gets her innings. The principal changes, no doubt, will take place in the wardrobe department. The sweater, running-trunks, and walking-sticks give way to chiffon gowns, picture hats, and powder-puffs. Sounds simple, and it is simple.

The knowledge that Maude Adams will soon lay aside "Peter Pan" and create a new rôle brings both regret and exultation. Wherein shall we meet another *Peter Pan?* Whence is to come another little chap who can restore to the middle-aged and the old some of the exuberance of youth? What play is there left to delight the child of seven and the child of seventy, to thus usurp the function of the three-ringed circus?

Alas! *Peter Pan,* if he will not grow up, has at least grown old in the theatrical sense, and Charles Frohman is too sagacious a manager to permit his favorite star to rest for long on the laurels of a single achievement. His greatest solicitude ever has been to find a suitable vehicle for Miss Adams. The babbling brook may grow silent, the torrent of Niagara may be stilled, the flow of the mighty St. Lawrence may cease, but Maude Adams' success must run on forever.

In Paris Mr. Frohman has found the successor to "Peter Pan." It is a play by M. Miguel Zamacois, entitled "Les Bouffons." The principal rôle will require Miss Adams to appear again in masculine garb. The great Bernhardt has played the part, as she did *L'Aiglon* before Miss Adams. In "Les Bouffons" the star must impersonate a hunchback; and one can almost feel in advance the plaintive appeal of Miss Adams as the cripple.

Religious and semi-religious plays ever have been deemed by the secular manager "good things." "Ben-Hur" and "The Sign of the Cross" continue to beckon the drama-vendors toward plays dealing with the teachings of Christ. Several Hebrew gentlemen in particular have exhibited a readiness to espouse Christianity in dramatic form. Since the dramatization of "Ben-Hur," the most lucrative play of all time, producers have sought high and low for its counterpart. Neither "The Prince of India" nor "The Nazarene" filled the bill. The first was spectacular without being good drama; the second was hopeless buncombe.

But in "The Christian Pilgrim," which is likely to carry Henrietta Crosman to triumph greater even than her glorious success in "Mistress Nell" or "Sweet Kitty Bellairs," the long-sought needle in the dramatic haystack has been found. It is a dramatization of "Pilgrim's Progress," to which more than a year's preparation has been given. To such an extent do choruses, ballets, and incidental music figure, that "The Christian Pilgrim" is akin to grand opera. It will be presented with the lavishness that marks productions at the Metropolitan and Manhattan Opera-houses. Of all the plays promised for the new theatrical year, none will be awaited with keener interest. From some standpoints it is the most important undertaking of the season.

Real plays of the real West never will be out of fashion, for the West breeds the action, the emotions, the stirring events that constitute the drama of life. Augustus Thomas has not forsaken his favorite West; or, at least, if he has changed his geographical base and gone farther south for a locale, he has chosen a country that smacks of our cowboys, our plains, and our mountains.

"Mexico" is the title of his latest play. Mr. Thomas, considered by many the most virile of American playwrights, has

not gone at the task in any haphazard manner, but has spent months in Mexico absorbing "color." The play has been written for Dustin Farnum.

The season at the New Amsterdam will be opened under auspicious conditions with "The Round-Up." It is the outgrowth of a simple vaudeville sketch by Edmund Day, called "The Sheriff." Its "big" scene is a desperate fight in a mountain pass between cowboys and a band of Indians. The serio-comic character of the play is best told in its very last line, delivered by the portly Maclyn Arbuckle in the rôle of *Slim Hoover:*

"Hell! no woman ever loved a fat man."

Those who reveled in "Peer Gynt" may find its counterpart in *"L'Oiseau Bleu"* ("The Blue Bird"), the first play Maeterlinck has written in several years. James K. Hackett acquired the American rights before he knew anything of its theme or treatment. He knew only that it was from the pen of the brilliant Maeterlinck, and that, therefore, it must be symbolic, philosophical, and possibly unfathomable. He may not have learned yet that in one weird scenè a group of little children are led to a graveyard and taught that they have lived before.

E. H. Sothern, now adrift from Julia Marlowe, will revive "Dundreary," the most famous of all his talented father's plays. Mr. Sothern may be brought to a realization that post mortems held over the plays of yesterday are sorrowful rites. With an enterprise that entitles him to large reward, he has determined also to put the character of Don Quixote on the stage. Sir Henry Irving made a similar attempt, and not a very happy one, a dozen years ago.

George Ade has contributed two new plays to the season's drama. One will be allotted to William H. Crane. The other is a dramatization of "Artie," the work which brought Mr. Ade from the obscurity of a Chicago newspaper office to national fame. *Artie* is the original of all the slang characters that have endeared themselves to playgoers.

The list might be continued indefinitely, for the new season opens with a flood of good things. John Drew, ably supported by his mustache and drawing-room manners—not to mention Miss Billie Burke, one of London's favorite actresses—is to play his annual fall engagement at the Empire Theater in "My Wife." Henry Arthur Jones, jubilant over the reception accorded "The Hypocrites," has again selected America as the "dog" upon which he will try his latest play, "The Galilean's Victory." It is a tragic-religious play, and has been pronounced by experts to be structurally perfect. From Charles Klein, author of "The Music Master" and "The Lion and the Mouse"—almost enough glory for one dramatist—we shall get "The Stepchild." Edwin Milton Royle's donation is "The Struggle Everlasting," a serious play built up from a tiny sketch, first presented at a Gambol of the Lambs Club.

Kyrle Bellew this season will step out of his dressing-room an artist. Paul Armstrong, the author, heretofore identified solely with plays of the West—has laid the scenes in Italy. Margaret Illington's excellent performance in "His House in Order" has won for her promotion to stellar honors. "Doctor Wake's Patient," a comedy that attained a fair share of success in England, will be her medium.

Every season must have its freak venture, and Arnold Daly usually may be relied upon to furnish it. He trots it forth this fall at the little Berkeley Lyceum Theater, where he will render a series of short plays guaranteed to freeze the blood and lift the hair to an upright position. To show his complete indifference to everybody but Arnold Daly he will not use the newspaper columns for advertising purposes or announcements, will not issue press tickets, and will not extend a more cordial welcome to the critics than to the man that honestly expects to enjoy the drama. Well, there's something of method in that form of madness, after all.



Quality always the aim of Ainslee's. Something about the October number. Richard Harding Davis' "The Scarlet Car" conventional, but "good form." "The Militants" by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews rather pleasant summer reading, but carelessly written. "Fräulein Schmidt and Mr. Anstruther" witty and interesting. M. Hamilton's "The First Claim" destitute of originality "The Lonely Lady of Grosvenor Square" by Mrs. Henry de la Pasture entirely proper and conventional. Eden Phillpotts' "The Whirlwind" of unquestionable literary merit. "Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne" a very attractive human document



IN this number of AINSLEE'S there is an array of fiction that ought to satisfy everybody. If names alone afford any guarantee of quality no reader is likely to be disappointed. Robert Hichens, Dorothy Dix, H. B. Marriott-Watson, Edith Macvane, Mary H. Vorse, Joseph C. Lincoln, Owen Oliver, Broughton Brandenburg, Martha McCulloch Williams, Caroline Duer, Ada W. Anderson, A. A. Knipe, and Campbell McCulloch make up a list of contributors impressive enough in itself to arrest the attention of the casual reader.

But, as readers of the magazine know very well, it is not the practise of its publishers to rely upon the reputation of authors, and that it is the purpose and constant endeavor to print only such material as is intrinsically the best; or, at least, as nearly so as conditions permit. Therefore, nobody is asked to read "Barbary Sheep" because it is written by Robert Hichens, or "The Wayward Scales" because it is written by Edith Macvane, or "Platonic Affection" because it is written by H. B. Marriott-Watson, or any of the other stories, because of the names of their authors. They are all of them good stories, and, in interest and variety and entertainment, form a collection that is unique, so that it is impossible to recommend any one above the rest. Their difference, each from the other, is merely a difference in representative type; and if there is any one that you do not like, you will be ready to admit that it is because you prefer another kind.

Mr. Hichens' serial, "Barbary Sheep," which has, of course, been a feature this summer, is concluded in this number. Its reception has been not only flattering, but somewhat sensational; so much so that the publishers wish it could have had a longer run. It will be succeeded by another serial, the opening chapters of which will appear in the October number, by a well-known and popular American author, whose three preceding books have been much more than ordinary successes. The new story is essentially American in every detail, and combines the local color of the West as well as that of New York, the action reaching on more than one occasion climaxes of unusual dramatic interest.

The novelette will be a detective story. That ought to be enough to say about it; and it need only be added that it is the best of its type that has ap-

peared in AINSLEE'S. Arthur Stringer, Rafael Sabatini, Johnson Morton, Sarah Guernsey Bradley, and Kate Jordan will be among the contributors of short stories.

If readers of "The Scarlet Car" take as much pleasure in the book as Richard Harding Davis obviously did in writing it, they will be amply repaid. There can be no doubt about how he felt in telling his story, for he is at all times in congenial company engaged in occupations equally congenial.

There may be a little doubt as to whether the automobile—no, car—or its owner is the hero; the reader can take his choice, for they are both "smart." Nothing offensive is allowed to appear; even the names, Winthrop, Carey, Peabody, Forbes, must satisfy the most rigid exclusiveness; and there is not to be detected the slightest lapse from accepted canons of good taste. In fact, everything about the book, including paper, binding, typography, and Mr. Davis' thoughts, is what some ambitious but undiscriminating critics might call "tasty." The covers of the book are bursting with "good form," paradoxical as it may sound to the fastidious.

To be sure, the titles of the three stories it contains may startle timid devotees of conventionality, and seem to contradict the foregoing summary; but, after all, "The Jail-Breakers," "The Trespassers," and "The Kidnappers" are merely titles, and may justly be considered as a harmless emphasis, by way of contrast, of the admirable proprieties; or perhaps a nominal concession made by Mr. Davis to the social solecisms of the reading public.

For these things the book is to be commended, and a careful reading of it is urged not so much for its interest as fiction, as for the chance it affords to learn a salutary lesson in good manners.

"The Militants," by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, is a collection of nine short stories published by Charles Scribner's Sons. They are rather pleasant summer reading, but there is nothing in any of them sufficiently striking to make an impression on the reader's memory, unless it is the author's tendency to make use of psychic phenomena. This tinge of occultism she has introduced into some of her previous stories, and in the volume in question it appears most frankly in "A Messenger" and "Through the Ivory Gate." The result is not altogether happy—the treatment is crude and unskilful. A commonplace story cannot be relieved of its triteness by the injection into it of one uncommon episode, and the supernatural in fiction requires a delicacy of touch, to make it convincing, that Mrs. Andrews has not displayed.

Besides being stories of only average quality, they show evidences of carelessness in the writing and editing. On page 319, for instance, in the story called "The Governor's Wife," is this: "Like an arrow from a bow he swung around the corner of the snowy piazza at Paul Smith's." Under the circumstances it is not hard to believe that he swung around the corner of the piazza; but it is reasonably certain that the feat was not accomplished as the author describes it. In "The Little Revenge," the heroine and her chaperon have a supper of cold, broiled lobster, strawberries, and Devonshire clotted cream, and then retire to "dreamless sleep." Why "dreamless"—necessarily?

In the magazine publication of the story, "A Messenger," the hero had the unusual experience of seeing the sun rise in the west, but in the book this has been corrected, to the extent, at least, of leaving the reader to make his own choice of where he will have it rise.

Three hundred and fifty pages of fiction, in the form of a one-sided correspondence, does not sound very attractive. The author of "Elizabeth and Her German Garden" has, however, succeeded in accomplishing a difficult task in making a very interesting tale out of the letters of Fräulein Rose-

Marie Schmidt to Mr. Roger Anstruther.

Ordinarily one would hardly expect a young woman who had suffered the humiliation that Fräulein Schmidt received from her lover to continue relations of any sort with him; but she is not to be judged by conventional standards, because she is by no means a woman of the ordinary type. Considering her character and his, it was inevitable that, if she exercised her self-control and patience, time could be trusted to square the account; and it does so very effectually. It may be too much to say that her consent to the maintenance of the friendly correspondence was influenced by the hope of reprisals; but it is obvious that as it progressed she realized more and more the strength of her position, because she never missed an opportunity to remind him of his infirmity of purpose.

As the book contains none of his letters, it is impossible to estimate his state of mind except as one may judge of it by her references to his replies; but he must have been both dense and thick-skinned if he did not wince occasionally.

With all her keenness of wit she is not cynical; on the contrary, she is warm-hearted and loving and human, but with sufficient pride, intelligence, and strength of will and sense of humor to save her from the further humiliation of showing bitterness and resentment. "Fräulein Schmidt and Mr. Anstruther" is published by Charles Scribner's Sons, and is probably the best work its author has done.

❧ ❧ ❧

"The First Claim," by M. Hamilton, published by Doubleday, Page & Co., is a problem story of a type that is neither very profound nor very original. A man need not be a seventh son of a seventh son to be able to foresee most of the consequences of the desertion by a wife and mother of her husband and children to live with another man. If it were a husband only to be left in the lurch, the problem might not be so simple to figure out, for there are many things that may be considered by a woman in making a choice between two men. But in the majority of cases it is pretty safe to say that women find it difficult to put their children entirely out of their thoughts; and it is equally certain that "the other man" will bestow little thought and less affection upon the husband's children. Thus the situation offers a fine opportunity for unhappiness, if not actual discord.

The trouble between Sir James and his wife was aggravated, if not caused, by a case of mother-in-law—as is customary—for Valerie found that she had little to say as the mistress of her own household or as the custodian of her daughter Gwenny, those functions being appropriated by Lady Palmer. As usual, she found a male comforter in the person of Charley Osborne; and the two had the courage of their convictions, or the complaisance to their desires, as you choose to regard it, and took the plunge. But the call of "the first claim" is unceasing, and Valerie mourns and Charley is fretful.

The story is managed with sufficient skill to make it interesting, and most readers will find enough in it to paint a moral and adorn a tale.

❧ ❧ ❧

"The Lonely Lady of Grosvenor Square," by Mrs. Henry de la Pasture, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., belongs to what imaginative and inventive critics would call the lavender-and-old-lace school of fiction. Being a story about a lonely lady, it is, of course, entirely proper and ladylike. There are no sensational incidents, no vulgar displays of emotion. Such troubles and disappointments as the lonely lady encounters she bears with decorum and Christian resignation.

She is called "the farm-bred Jeanne," and has her first experience of life when she comes to London at the invitation of an elderly aunt, who soon dies, leaving her in possession of a rather elaborate establishment in Grosvenor Square. The old lady's will contains

provisions, however, for Jeanne's twin brother, who is with the British army in South Africa, and her circumstances are complicated later by the latter's death, and the subsequent arrival in London of his wife and young son, of whose existence she has previously had no intimation.

She has some compensation for her disappointment, though, for it is her good fortune to win the love of a very estimable young duke of blameless life, and finally has "the consolation of living in as romantic and turreted a castle as Ireland can boast; in a country not less wildly picturesque, nor less well-timbered and well-watered, than in her native Wales."

"The Whirlwind," by Eden Phillpotts, published by McClure, Phillips & Co., is another of the author's typical Dartmoor stories; a convincing picture of the peasant life of Devonshire.

It is very much like his other stories of that locality, with the same setting, the same characters, and the same play of primitive emotions. The action grows out of the love of Daniel Brendon for Sarah Jane Friend, who becomes his wife, and is afterward seduced by her husband's employer; the climax of the tale is reached with Daniel's discovery of the wrong and the penalty exacted from his wife. It is altogether a grim and rather sordid recital, relieved more or less by the fine descriptive writing, in which Mr. Phillpotts always excels, and the flashes of humor in the talk of many of the minor characters.

In spite of its unquestionable literary merits, it is a book that will not attain wide popularity; and that the author himself realizes this as clearly as any of his critics is made manifest by the persistence with which he clings to these studies, for that is the only word to apply to his Devonshire tales. Both the author and his publishers must have some other motive than a commercial one in making public such novels, assuming, of course, that they have discrimination.

"Memoirs of the Comtesse De Boigne" is just published by Charles Scribner's Sons, after a delay of over twenty-five years. The book is a faithful reproduction of the original manuscript, which, as Madame De Boigne says in her introduction, is "merely the chatter of an old woman and the piecing together of the conversation of her *salon*."

It covers the period of 1781 to 1814, and consists of the author's recollections of many of the most famous personages of the time with whom she was on terms of friendship, and even intimacy. The chronicles are essentially of a personal character, undertaken with no thought of adding a contribution to the history of the time, but in spite of that fact they have unquestionable historical value, and they will be found attractive and interesting also as a human document—as an exposition of the character and point of view of a brilliant woman in a brilliant environment.

"The Tree of Heaven," by Robert W. Chambers, D. Appleton & Co., is not to be classified either as a novel or as a book of short stories. It is actually a sequence of episodes involving the various guests at a dinner given at the Lenox Club, all of which are foretold by the host. The latter is an expert in psychic phenomena, having been the author of books on "Occult Philosophy" and the occupant of the Chair of Psychical Philosophy in the University of Trebizond. Helmer, Smith, Leeds, Edgerton, Shannon, Harrod, and the rest, all have the experiences predicted for them, and the result is very entertaining reading, not less so because of the rather uncanny circumstances.

The titles of the chapters, such as "The Carpet of Belshazzar," "The Sign of Venus," "The Tree of Dreams," "The Swastika," and "The Golden Pool," are suggestive enough to pique curiosity, and, together with the fact of Mr. Chambers' authorship, are a sufficient guarantee of interesting tales.

It must not be supposed, however,

that these tales are wholly fantastic creations of the imagination. They deal with every-day facts of life, mostly in New York, and with the sort of people that we are all familiar with in current fiction, at least; but they are told with a skill that few authors beside Mr. Chambers possess. The last one, "The Ghost of Chance," is perhaps the best; it is, at least, most characteristic of Mr. Chambers, suggesting, as it does, some of the scenes in "The Fighting Chance."

"Gillette's Social Redemption" is a rather formidable volume, for which Mr. King C. Gillette and Mr. Melvin L. Severy are jointly responsible. It is published by Herbert B. Turner & Co.

It comprises twelve books, averaging four chapters each, which are designed as an exposition of economic and industrial conditions as they exist to-day the world over, to which are added two appendices setting forth Mr. Gillette's system of social redemption.

The idea of the authors is an ambitious one, contemplating as it does the consolidation of all the civilized people of the world into a single great industrial corporation, "with an unlimited, elastic, and constantly self-adjusting capitalization," in which all mankind will be one common brotherhood. It is, to all intents and purposes, a universal application of the principles of socialism.

The book is one which, from its character and scope, cannot be adequately analyzed here; it may be said, however, that it possesses unusual interest for those who wish to make a study of social problems.

"In the Cause of Freedom," by Arthur W. Marchmont, published by Frederick A. Stokes Company, is an adventure story of the better class.

The scene of the story is Russian Poland, the hero is Robert Anstruther, a young Englishman of the heroic type of contemporary fiction, whose presence in the country is accounted for by the fact that he has been visiting his friend, Count Ladislas Tuleski; and the heroine is Volna Drakona, who is involved, through some of her male relatives, in a conspiracy against the Russian authorities. It needs only to be added that the two meet under circumstances which threaten disaster to the young woman; any seasoned novel reader can determine from these facts whether or not it is the kind of tale that will interest him. If he decides that it is, he will feel himself amply repaid after his perusal of it. He will, of course, know beforehand that the young people are going to have anything but an easy time in their attempts to evade the Russian police, and to arrive at a satisfactory understanding; he may think he is sure that they will succeed finally in both directions, but he will never be entirely free from a more or less poignant feeling of suspense and uncertainty as to how it is all to be accomplished. The complications succeed each other without any halt in the action, and at no time is it possible to foresee any result.

Important New Books.

"Needles and Pins," Justin Huntley McCarthy, Harper & Bros.

"The Diary of Delia," Onoto Watanna, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"The Wingless Victory," M. P. Willcocks, John Lane Co.

"Travers," Sara Dean, Frederick A. Stokes Company.

"The Artistic Temperament," Jane Wardle, McClure, Phillips & Co.

"Count Bunker," J. Storer Clouston, Brentano's.

"The Talking Woman," May Isabel Fisk, Harper & Bros.

"The Message," A. J. Dawson, Dana Estes & Co.

"Beatrix of Clare," John Reed Scott, J. B. Lippincott Company.

"The Serf," Guy Thorne, R. F. Fenno & Co.

"Bachelor Betty," Winifred James, E. P. Dutton & Co.

"Tinman," Tom Gallon, Small, Maynard & Co.

"As the Hague Ordains," Journal of a Russian Prisoner's Wife in Japan, Henry Holt & Co.

"The Wooing of Takola," Franklin W. Calkins, Fleming H. Revell Company.



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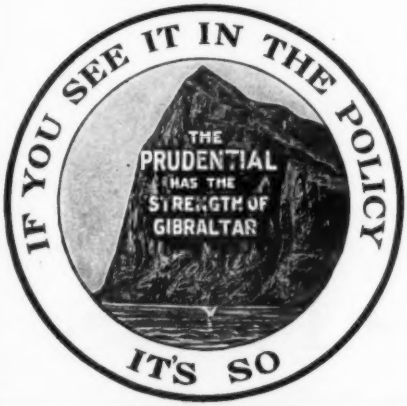
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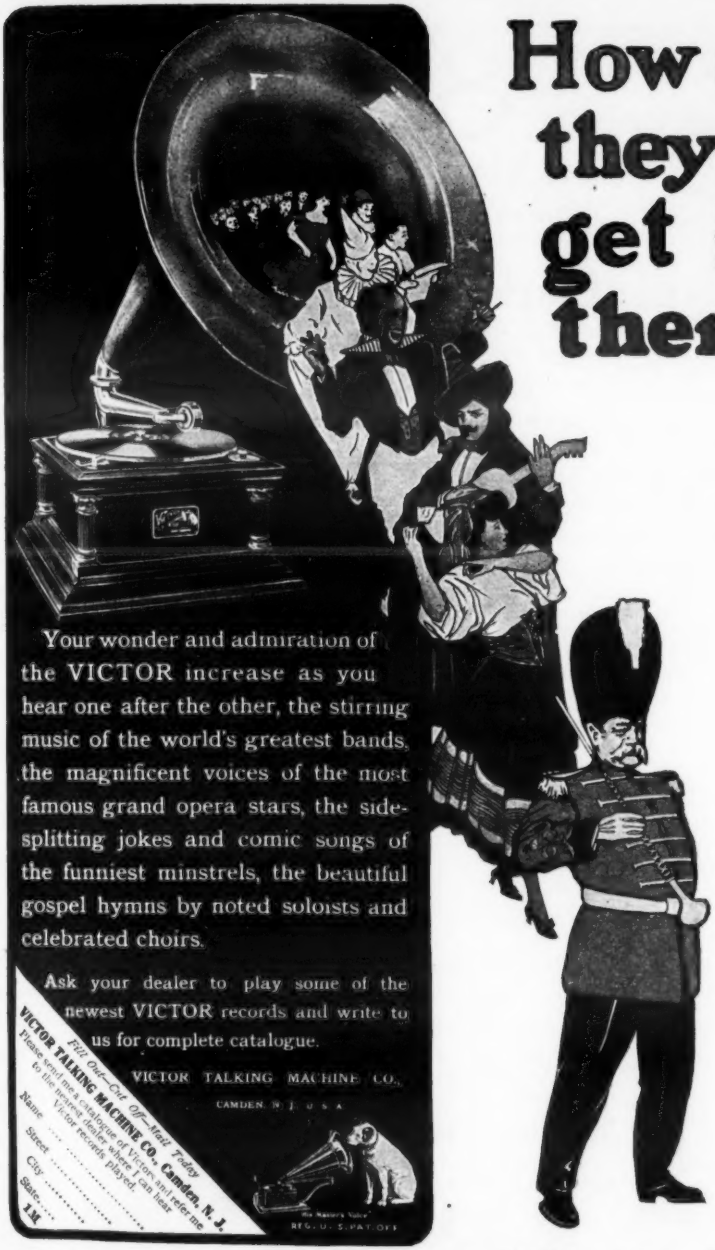
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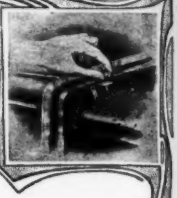
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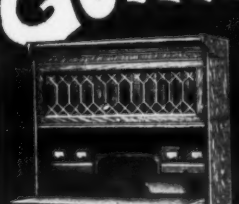
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Most certainly we do, for to prevent that trouble the famous Lucky Curve was invented.

"Then why is it every one who uses a fountain pen does not buy a Parker?"

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Very gladly.

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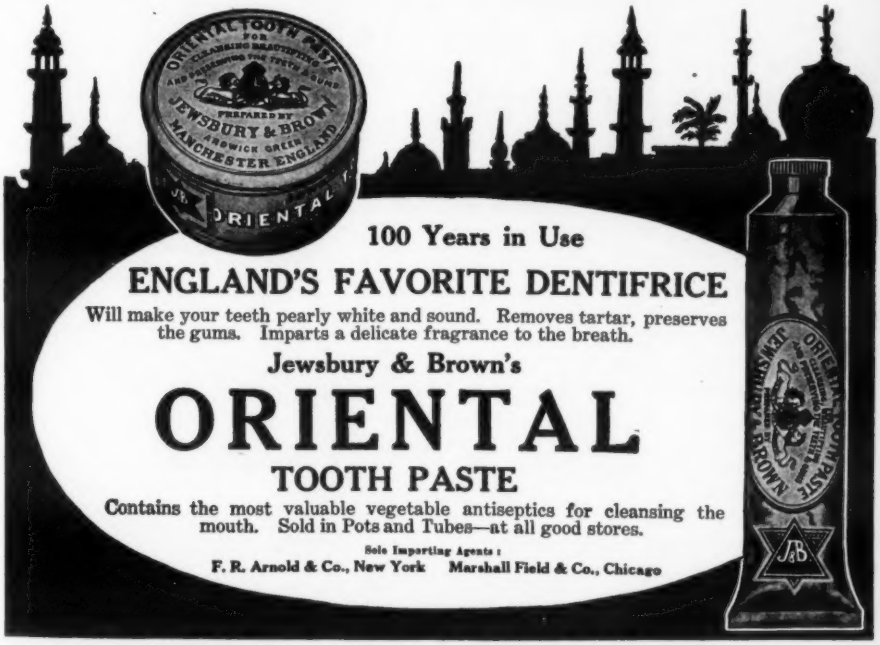
This shows the Lucky Curve.

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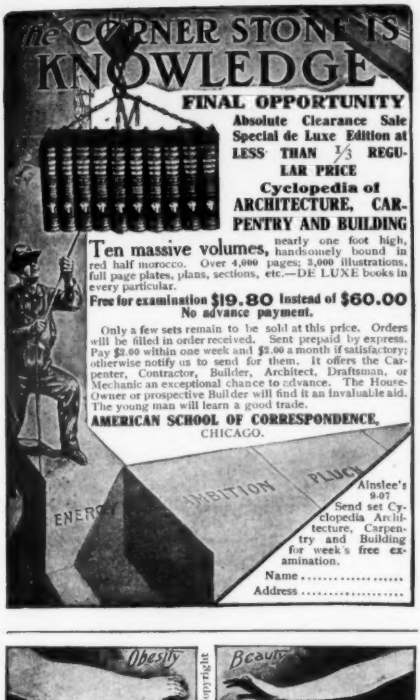
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FREE!—Valuable booklet on how to treat diseases.

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We have opened this classified advertising section, and invite all reputable advertisers to come in—no display—all must be set in uniform type—no objectionable advertisements accepted—minimum space, four lines; maximum space in this section, thirty lines. Our aim will be to eliminate all questionable advertisements, and we bespeak our readers' assistance to help keep this section clean and profitable to all. Rates, $2.00 a line, which includes THE POPULAR and AINSLEE'S Magazines, making a total of 4,000,000 readers—the cheapest and best Classified Advertising medium on the market. Next issue closes August 31st. Address SMITH'S MAGAZINE, Classified Advertising Department, Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, New York City.

Agents and Help Wanted

BE—YOUR—OWN—BOSS! Many make $2,000 a year. You have the same chance. Start a mail-order business at home. We tell you how. Money coming in daily. Very good profits. Everything furnished. Write at once for our "Starter" and free particulars. Address N. S. Krueger Co., 155 Washington St., Chicago, Ill.

LADY Secretaries Wanted—Organize Grocery and Soap clubs. Easy work. Big Earnings, no investment. Postal brings catalogue and special offer 4. R. & G. Supply Co., Binghamton, N.Y.

$75 WEEKLY easily made fitting Eye Glasses. Business quickly learned, pleasant, profitable. No field so little worked. Write for Free "Booklet 58." National Optical College, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS wanted to sell our Stylographic and Fountain pens. Write for Catalogue and Agents' discount. S. X. Ullrich & Co., Manufacturers, 603 Thames Building, New York, N.Y.

TEACHER—Well known business college desires expert penman for their commercial department. Salary $1,000-$1,300. Call, write. Hapgoods, 305-307 Broadway, New York.

WE WANT throughout the South at top wages, men of ability for high class positions. Demand exceeds supply. Write today, giving particulars, experience, etc. Southern Employment Co., Hattiesburg, Miss.

WANTED: Capable agents to handle new high grade up-to-date articles; lightning sellers in all homes, offices, stores, shops; $3 to $10 daily guaranteed. Promotion assured. A. Thomas Mfg. Co., 10 A St., Dayton, O.

DEMONSTRATOR. Honest man or woman in each county to demonstrate well known article and take charge of other demonstrators. Experience unnecessary. References required. State salary expected. Address McLean, Black & Co., 18 Parkman Building, Boston, Mass.

Agents and Help Wanted—Continued.

BRIGHT, ENERGETIC, HONEST, Salesmen and Saleslades for clean investment propositions wanted in every City in the U. S. Capable men and women can earn from $2,000 to $10,000 annually. Jerry Culbertson & Co., 601 Hall Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

AGENTS WANTED. Portraits 35c, Frames 15c, sheet pictures 1c, stereoscopes 25c, views 1c. 30 days credit. Samples & Catalog Free. Consolidated Portrait Co., 290-164 W. Adams St., Chicago.

AGENTS wanted to represent old established Mail Order House. Over one thousand rapid selling specialties. From $5 to $10 per day easily made; costly outfit free. George A. Parker, Dept. 9, 720 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

$100 PER MONTH; Salary Paid Weekly. Energetic man in each county to represent Hardware Department. Established business. Expense money in advance. The Columbia House, S-25, Chicago.

YOUNG Men of Education to represent well-known house as solicitors. High-grade line; agreeable work. Not books. Salesmen earning up to $700 per month. High commission or guaranteed salary. Exclusive territory. Write L. R. Bailey, 5 W. 19th St., N. Y.

HUSTLERS Everywhere $25 to $30 made weekly distributing circulars, samples; no canvassing. Steady. Merchants Out-door Ad Co., Chicago.

Watches & Jewelry

SENT FREE TO INTENDING BUYERS—Our new catalogue 500 pages, 30,000 engravings, 100,000 items, Jewelry, Diamonds, Watches, Silverware, Clocks, Optical and Musical goods, etc. Lowest prices on record. Fine pianos, guaranteed ten years, only $139.50. Write to-day for the big book of the Foremost Concern of its kind in the world. S. F. Myers Co., S. F. Myers Bldg., 47-49 Maiden Lane, Desk S, New York.

Business Opportunities

SELL PATENTS. To buy or having one to sell write Chas. A. Scott, 1071 Granite Building, Rochester, New York

ARE YOU open for a better position? Copy of Opportunities, describing 500 positions open, free if you write us today, stating age and experience. Hapgoods, 305-307 Broadway, N. Y.

"SUCCESS IN THE STOCK MARKET." Our little book gives interesting details. It's yours for the asking. Write for it. John A. Boardman & Co., Stock Brokers, 53 Broadway, N. Y.

START a mail order business; we furnish everything necessary; only few dollars required; new plan, success certain; costs nothing to investigate. Milburn Hicks, 754 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago

GOLDFIELD, the Wonder City. Facts more wonderful than fiction. Free copies of "Gossip" for the asking. Our magazine gives facts only. Tells all about the mines. Address Goldfield Gossip, Drawer 588, Goldfield, Nev.

A GENUINE Splendid Opportunity: We need more salesmen to represent us in high grade securities. No money required. Write at once. J. E. Ward & Co., 114 W. 3d St., Los Angeles, Cal.

"THOUGHTS THAT PAY" and "U. S. Letters Patent," our two books, give list of valuable inventions wanted and tell how to obtain patents. Both free; write for them. $1,000,000 offered for one invention. Valuable patents quickly obtained. We guarantee you against loss. Woodward & Chandlee, Att'ys, 1202 F. St., Washington, D. C.

RICH PLACER GOLD reported by U. S. Government Engineers. Full particulars of "ground floor" investment opportunity on application to Jerry Culbertson, 601 Hall Building, Kansas City, Mo.

WANTED: Members to join co-operative real estate company. Profits high; experience unnecessary. Write for plan. Continental Realty Company, Salem, S. D.

Business Opportunities—Continued.

A GOOD OPPORTUNITY for anyone with ambition. No canvassing. Write for particulars and get started in the right direction. Ludlow & Mathews Co., Box 765, New York City.

Patents & Lawyers

PATENTS THAT PROTECT. Book free. Rates low. Highest references, best services. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS SECURED or fee returned. Send sketch for free report as to patentability. Guide Book and What to Invent, with valuable List of Inventions Wanted, sent free. One Million Dollars offered for one invention; $16,000 for others. Patents secured by us advertised free in World's Progress; sample free. Evans, Wilkens & Company, 856 "F" Street, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS — Trade-Marks — Labels. Send for my free book "How to Get Them." Invent something useful, then have it patented and turn it into money, before some one else does. There is money in practical inventions. Send description for free opinion as to patentability. Advice free. Joshua R. H. Potts, Lawyer, 306 Ninth St., Washington, D. C.; 80 Dearborn St., Chicago; 929 Chestnut St., Philadelp'a

Real Estate

INVEST YOUR MONEY near a great and growing metropolis. Building lots in Boston's suburbs at $20 to $50 each. Boston Suburban Land Co., 28 School St., Boston, Mass.

For the Deaf

THE ACOUSTICON MAKES THE DEAF HEAR INSTANTLY. No trumpet, unsightly or cumbersome apparatus. Special instruments for Theatres and Churches. In successful use throughout the country. Booklet, with endorsement of those you know, free. K. O Turner, President, General Acoustic Co., 1267 Broadway, New York City.

Pianos and Musical Instruments

LIMITED number Imperial Schleicher High Grade $400 pianos for $185. Chance of a lifetime. Freight paid. Guaranteed. Write Von Begienberg Co., 69½ Whitehall St., Atlanta, Ga.

FOR SALE — Steinway Upright Piano having a remarkable tone, original cost $1000, worth at least $600, will sell for $200. W. J. D., 1923 Tribune Building, New York City.

For the Home

USE LAMB'S WOOL DUSTERS with long handles for Floors, Walls and Ceilings. They pick up the dust and can be washed with soap and water. Will last for years. Sent prepaid for $1.00. N. Bohn & Co., 1946 Columbus Road, Cleveland, Ohio.

BUTCHER'S BOSTON POLISH is the best finish made for floors and interior wood work. Not brittle; will not scratch or deface like shellac or varnish. Send for free booklet. For sale by dealers in Paints, Hardware and House Furnishings. The Butcher Polish Co., 356 Atlantic Ave., Boston, Mass.

FREE SAMPLE TO HOUSEWIVES. X-Ray Stove Polish is guaranteed to go twice as far as paste or liquid polishes. It is the brightest, best and most economical stove polish made. It makes blacking a stove a pleasure. Any housewife who writes us mentioning AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE and giving name of her dealer, will receive a sample free. Address X-Ray Stove Polish, Dept. H, 78 Hudson Street, New York City.

Jewelry - Novelties Post-Cards & Books

PUBLISH YOUR OWN POST CARDS. We manufacture post cards for you, from photographs, sketches or designs of individuals, hotels, buildings, residences, animals, or landscapes, plain or colored, and print your name on as publisher. Quick delivery guaranteed. Send for samples and prices. Advance Studio, 61 Murray Street, New York.

For the Figure

AUTO-MASSEUR REDUCES YOUR FIGURE PERMANENTLY Regardless of age or sex. No drugging, dieting, exertion or sweating. Will prove it free. So confident am I that my Auto-Masseur, without your aid, will speedily restore your figure to youthful symmetry, that I will mail it free of all cost for forty days' trial. Write for Auto-Masseur booklet 35. Prof. Burns, 1300 Broadway, N. Y. City.

Music

POPULAR SHEET MUSIC 12c. COPY POSTPAID. "Arrah Wanna," "Blue Bell," "Bullfrog and Coon," "Cheyenne," "Happy Heine," "San Antonio." Send 2c. postage for free catalog. I. O. Emmons & Co., 66 Leonard Street, New York.

Women's Apparel and Toilet Articles

CORSETS MADE TO ORDER. Write for booklet and directions for self measurement. Agents Wanted. Henry H. Todd, York Street, New Haven, Conn.

LONG KID GLOVES 16 Button (24 inches), black or white $2.50, colors $2.75. 12 Button (20 inches), $2.00 and $2.25. Silk Gloves, 16 Button, black, whites and all colors $1.00, $1.25 and $1.50. Send for catalogue. The Long Glove Co., Dept. L. 94 Warren St., N.Y.

MME. VIVIENNE, FRENCH CORSET MAKER, 22 WEST 33RD ST., NEW YORK, OPPOSITE THE WALDORF-ASTORIA. "FEATHERWEIGHT" ABDOMINAL BELTS for ladies and gentlemen a specialty; permanent reduction of abdomen or hips guaranteed; no discomfort to wearer; every facility for fitting by mail. Price $5.00.

PONDS EXTRACT is the greatest all-around household remedy ever produced and should be in every home ready for instant use. Illustrated booklet "First Aid to the Injured" sent free if you write. Lamont, Corliss & Co., Agents, Dept. 6, 78 Hudson Street, New York.

DUPONT TOILET BRUSHES—the best made in the world. We will send free to any lover of really good toilet brushes a very interesting booklet explaining how to select a good brush when buying, also how to properly clean and take care of brushes—information that every one should know. Write us and ask for "The Dupont Brush Book," advertised in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE. Give your name and dealer's name also. E. Dupont & Company, 26 and 28 Washington Place, New York City.

Miscellaneous

"ODORINE" for strong smelling feet, also good for armpits, chafing, tired and tender feet. Postpaid on receipt of price, 25c. Sturm Manufacturing Co., 827 Penna. Ave., Baltimore, Md.

DEAF! Invisible Ear Pellicles just patented, instantly relieve Deafness and Head noises. Whispers plainly heard. Superior to anything on the market. Cost much less. Write for booklet. The Pellicle Co., 17 Grant Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

WANTED — CLERKS and others with common school educations only, who wish to qualify for ready positions at $25 a week and over, to write for free copy of my new prospectus and endorsements from leading concerns everywhere. One graduate fills $8,000 place, another $5,000, and any number earn $1,500. The best clothing ad writer in New York owes his success within a few months to my teachings. Demand exceeds supply. George H. Powell, Advertising and Business Expert, 579 Metropolitan Annex, New York.

Try a Classified Advertisement in Ainslee's.

The Rate is only $1.00 a Line.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

THE OCTOBER
Popular Magazine

"EVERY STORY A GOOD ONE."

The Return of Norroy

Bronson-Howard's famous creation, Yorke Norroy, diplomatic agent, reappears in a timely novelette, called "An Alias from Burke's." It has to do with the Anglo-Japanese alliance about which England has been so silent. Norroy takes keen pleasure in forcing John Bull's hand.

Marriott Watson's New Serial

By this time everybody who cares anything for stories of adventure has read the opening chapters of "The Devil's Pulpit." For that reason there is no need to say more about it. Mr. Watson has written a classic. In the present instalment there is a momentous parting of the ways.

A Plea for the Man Who is Down

Of the shorter stories "The Dead One," by A. M. Chisholm, will probably be the best liked. The central figure is a man who has been at the top, but through no fault of his own has become "a dead one." How he climbs back is told in a fashion that will delight you.

The Fun-Makers

There are several fun-makers in the October "POPULAR"—and Heaven help the man who has no sense of humor! We commend to your reading W. MacLeod Raine's "A Flyer in Matrimony," or B. M. Bower's "Music Hath Charms," or Everard Jack Appleton's "The Stuffed Cat."

A Complete Novel of the Northwest

"Raw Gold" is a long story of the great Canadian Northwest, by Bertrand W. Sinclair. It will give you a glimpse of the real perils that beset the hardy troopers of the Northwest Mounted Police.

Tommy the Irresistible

Tommy Williams has won a whole lot of friends since his introduction to the "POPULAR." This month the versatile artist, hypnotist, and amateur detective solves the mystery of the "perfume of madness."

George Randolph Chester's Contribution

Worthy of special mention is George Randolph Chester's story, "After the Raid," a clean-cut, spirited yarn, with a whole lot of heart interest.

On sale 10th of September. **Price 15 cents**

STREET & SMITH, 79 to 89 SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

JOHN HOLLAND FOUNTAIN PEN

With Hold-Fast Cap



"You Know the Smile"

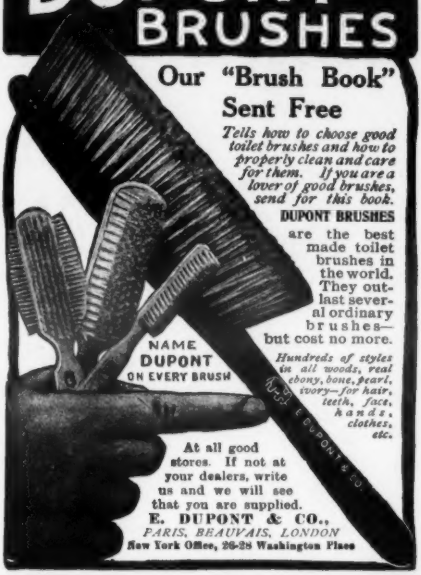
THE best aid to cheerfulness in business is one of these modern "pocket pieces." Writes without a break. Fitted with the **John Holland Gold Pen and Patent Elastic Fissured Feed.** A masterful creation, the climax of three generations of successful pen manufacture. This simple invention insures even flow and easy writing. With the Elastic feed "ink floods" are impossible.

Our HOLD-FAST CAPS (Patented), attachable to all our pens, are really policies of insurance against pen loss. A sightly little device holding pen tightly to pocket. Adds 25 cents to cost of any size fountain pen. May be applied to any John Holland Fountain Pen.

If your nearby dealer does not handle, address us direct for FREE Catalog filled with illustrations, showing over 200 styles and sizes costing from $2 upward.

THE JOHN HOLLAND GOLD PEN CO.
Established 1841 CINCINNATI

DUPONT BRUSHES



Our "Brush Book" Sent Free

Tells how to choose good toilet brushes and how to properly clean and care for them. If you are a lover of good brushes, send for this book.

DUPONT BRUSHES are the best made toilet brushes in the world. They outlast several ordinary brushes—but cost no more.

Hundreds of styles in all woods, real ebony, bone, pearl, ivory—for hair, teeth, face, hands, clothes, etc.

At all good stores. If not at your dealers, write us and we will see that you are supplied.

E. DUPONT & CO.,
PARIS, BEAUVAIS, LONDON
New York Office, 26-28 Washington Place


"Hoosier" Steel Range

Don't Pay Two Prices for Stoves and Ranges

Order direct from our Stove Factory and **save all dealers' profits.** HOOSIER Stoves and Ranges are the **"Best in the World;" Fuel savers and easy bakers.** Sold on **30 days' free trial. We pay the freight. Guaranteed two years.** Our large illustrated catalog gives descriptions, prices, etc.

Write for our catalog.

Hoosier Stove Co., Factory, 253 State St., Marion, Ind.



I Teach Sign Painting

Show Card Writing or Lettering

by mail and guarantee success. Only field not overcrowded. My instruction is unequaled because practical, personal and thorough. Easy terms. Write for large catalogue.

CHAS. J. STRONG, Pres.,
Detroit School of Lettering
Dept. 22, Detroit, Mich.
"Oldest and Largest School of Its Kind"



FLASH LIKE GENUINE

Day or night. You can own a Diamond equal in brilliancy to any genuine Stone at one thirtieth the cost.

BARODA DIAMONDS
IN SOLID GOLD RINGS

stand acid test and expert examination. We guarantee them. See them first, then pay. **Catalogue Free.** Patent Ring Measure included for FIVE two-cent stamps.

THE BARODA COMPANY,
Dept. N. 250 North State St., Chicago



DOLCEOLA

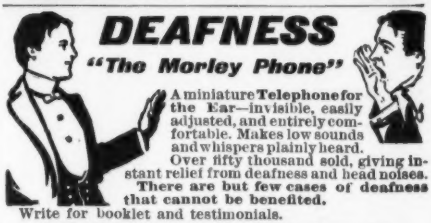
A Miniature Grand Piano

The DOLCEOLA'S captivating harmony and original construction give it instant popularity, and the hearty endorsement of musical experts everywhere. It appeals to the larger number because of its low cost.

FREE, handsome catalog.

Agents make $100 to $500 monthly.

The Toledo Symphony Co.,
938 Snow Flake Bldg., Toledo, Ohio



DEAFNESS

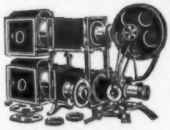
"The Morley Phone"

A miniature **Telephone for the Ear**—invisible, easily adjusted, and entirely comfortable. Makes low sounds and whispers plainly heard. Over fifty thousand sold, giving instant relief from deafness and head noises. **There are but few cases of deafness that cannot be benefited.**

Write for booklet and testimonials.

THE MORLEY COMPANY, Dept. 72.
31 South 16th Street. Philadelphia

IT PAYS BIG To Amuse The Public With Motion Pictures



NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY as our instruction Book and "Business Guide" tells all. We furnish Complete Outfits with Big Advertising Posters, etc. Humorous dramas brimful of fun, travel, history, religion, temperance work and songs illustrated. One man can do it. **Astonishing Opportunity** in any locality for a man with a little money to show in churches, school houses, lodge halls, theatres, etc. **Profits $10 to over $100 per night.** Others do it, **why not you?** It's easy; write us and we'll tell you how. **Catalogue free.**

AMUSEMENT SUPPLY CO., 463 Chemical Bank Bldg., CHICAGO.

$49 (Bare)



3 to 5 H.P.

Little Giant
GASOLINE MOTORS

Reliable, Reversible, Two Cycle. Two and Three Port. Guaranteed for one year. Simple and easy to operate.

Our Catalog K 3 is worth your having. Send 10c. in stamps for our Book entitled "Ignition, Vaporization, Installation and Operation of a Gasoline Motor."

UNITED MFG. CO., Detroit, Mich.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



THE
AFTER-DINNER LIQUEUR
OF REFINED TASTE

LIQUEUR
PÈRES
CHARTREUX

—GREEN AND YELLOW—

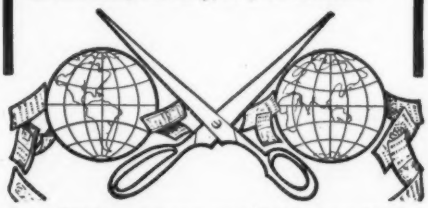
DAINTY DELICIOUS
DIGESTIVE

At first-class Wine Merchants, Grocers, Hotels Cafés.
Bâtjer & Co., 45 Broadway, New York, N. Y.
Sole Agents for United States.



$1000 Per 100

is what one man pays us for Press Clippings. If worth that much to him (for very unusual service), wouldn't it be worth a few dollars per month to you to get "inside" news, from far and near, and daily, re. your business?



With busy shears, we cull the wheat from the chaff of trade or personal items in over 50,000 publications. News from everywhere or news from Special Localities,—Trade Talk,—Squibs on Special Topics, Personal Items or Samples of competing advertisements,—all are quickly clipped for *you*, as per *your* Special Interests.

Send for Booklet and be convinced that you cannot afford to be without this service.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU
1600 Boyce Building, CHICAGO, ILL.

Hotel Martinique

Broadway, 32d and 33d Streets

Under the same management as the Hotel St. Denis

That splendid service and attention to small details that have made the "St. Denis" famous among the older New York hotels is now duplicated in the very center of the shopping and theatre district.

The Martinique offers at moderate rates the very highest standard of entertainment to the transient public.

Rooms $2 and upwards.
With bath $3.50 and upwards.
Parlor, bedroom and bath $6 and upwards.

The Martinique restaurants have already become famous for their excellence of cuisine and service.

WM. TAYLOR & SON
Incorporated

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Known By This Seal

Trade Mark
Necco SWEETS
New England Confectionery Co
BOSTON

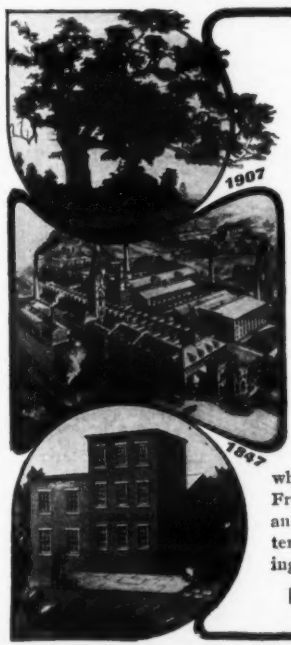
This Seal identifies 500 different kinds of the choicest confectionery designated by the name Necco Sweets. To understand their high standard of excellence, ask your dealer for

Lenox Chocolates

—delicious confections having a variety of exquisite flavors daintily concealed by a coat of rich chocolate. Necco Sweets are above the requirements of the Pure Food Laws.

All dealers who sell high-grade goods have them. If yours does not, send us 25 cents for an attractive package of Lenox Chocolates; or, better still, send $1 00 for a special package in a handsome art box. Either package sent postpaid.

NEW ENGLAND CONFECTIONERY COMPANY, BOSTON, MASS.

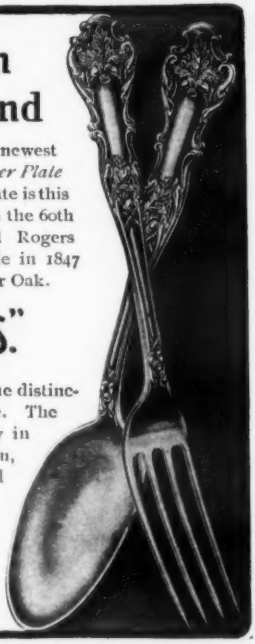


A New Pattern in a Famous Brand

CHARTER OAK is the name of the newest pattern in "1847 ROGERS BROS." "*Silver Plate that Wears.*" Particularly appropriate is this name for the pattern brought out in the 60th anniversary year of the original Rogers Brothers ware, which was first made in 1847 in Hartford, the home of the Charter Oak.

"1847 ROGERS BROS."

knives, spoons, forks, etc., enjoy the distinction of being the best in silver plate. The Charter Oak pattern is noteworthy in the richness and finish of the design, which is a combination of Bright and French Gray, giving to the various pieces an unusual degree of beauty and character. Send for **Catalogue "J-2"** showing this and the other leading patterns.



MERIDEN BRITANNIA CO., Meriden, Conn.
(International Silver Co., Successor.)

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS —MORE PROFIT

Have you noticed that a dealer does not attempt to substitute unless you call for some article of well-established reputation? A good many dealers now give you what you ask for, but a great many still are not satisfied with their retailer's profit, but want the manufacturer's profit also, by putting up their own inferior goods to look as nearly like the original article as possible. The best way to get what you ask for is to leave the store when the dealer attempts to substitute.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

JAP-A-LAC

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

"WEARS LIKE IRON"

A HIGH GRADE VARNISH AND STAIN COMBINED



YES—IT'S JAP-A-LAC!

There is only **one** JAP-A-LAC—it is put up in Green Labeled cans and is easily distinguished by the trade-marked name.

There are 16 beautiful colors, for refinishing everything about the home, from cellar to garret. All articles of wood or metal should be JAP-A-LAC-ED as soon as they become scuffed or rusty looking.

Floors, Interior Woodwork, Weather-Beaten Doors, Chairs, Tables, Andirons, Gas Fixtures and a thousand other things can be kept looking like new by the use of JAP-A-LAC.

Get a can today, of any color you desire, and prove to yourself the wonderful results it produces.

For Sale by Paint, Hardware, and Drug Dealers. All sizes from 15c to $2.50

A WARNING AGAINST THE DEALER WHO TRIES TO SUBSTITUTE.

If your dealer offers you a substitute, say to him: "No, thank you; I want what I asked for. Good bye."
Trade with the dealer who gives you what you ask for. That's JAP-A-LAC.
Write for beautiful illustrated booklet, and interesting color card. FREE for the asking.

If building, write for our complete Finishing Specifications. They will be mailed free. Our Architectural Green Label Varnishes are of the highest quality.

The Glidden Varnish Co.
920 Rockefeller Bldg., Cleveland, O.

If YOUR dealer does not keep JAP-A-LAC, send us his name and 10c (except for Gold, which is 25c) to cover cost of mailing, and we will send FREE Sample, (quarter pint can) to any point in the U. S.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



ANHEUSER-BUSCH'S

Malt-Nutrine

IN SPLITS

is served on Pullman and Dining Cars and on Ocean and Lake Steamers.

Travel sickness, on land or sea, is immediately relieved by its use. Malt-Nutrine is a tonic and liquid food easily retained by the weakest stomach.

Prepared by

Anheuser-Busch, St. Louis, Mo.

A Legal trial by Jury is given before twelve fair-minded men for a verdict, but

ONE FAIR TRIAL



at least, of the Gillette Safety Razor has been given by ***more*** than one million men who to-day are ***satisfied users.***

¶ From their opinion comes the ***verdict*** that the "GILLETTE" will do all that is claimed for it and will do ***more*** than any other shaving device—that it is a Time Saver, a Money Saver—that it will adjust itself to your beard, whether harsh or soft without semblance of a cut or a scratch, and that you can "SHAVE YOURSELF" at any time and in any place, under hygienic conditions, at home or traveling, in three to five minutes' time.

¶ If you will give it ***one fair trial,*** you will also render the same verdict.

¶ The Gillette Safety Razor consists of a triple silver-plated holder and twelve double-edged, wafer-like blades. The holder will last for the longest lifetime, while blades when dull are thrown away and you buy

10 Brand New Double-Edged "GILLETTE" Blades for 50c.

No blades exchanged or resharpened.

The price of the "GILLETTE" Set is $5.00 everywhere.

Sold by the leading Jewelry, Drug, Cutlery, and Hardware Dealers throughout the world.

Ask for *the "GILLETTE" and booklet. Where substitutes are offered,* **Refuse** *same and write at once for our 30-day free trial offer.*

GILLETTE SALES COMPANY

255 Times Bldg., New York City

Gillette Safety Razor

NO STROPPING NO HONING

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

When School Opens



Boys and girls will dread the drudgery less if, as an inspiration to well doing, they are given a pen they will be proud to write with. A pen that protects clothes from ink spots, because its simple, common-sense and workmanlike construction keeps the ink in sufficient amount where it belongs, at the point of the pen, and not oozing out from joints and crevices. A pen that stays put in a boy's pocket because of the Clip-Cap. A pen that will teach boy or girl neat and orderly habits. There is only one such pen, and that is a

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

The pen with the Clip-Cap

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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



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